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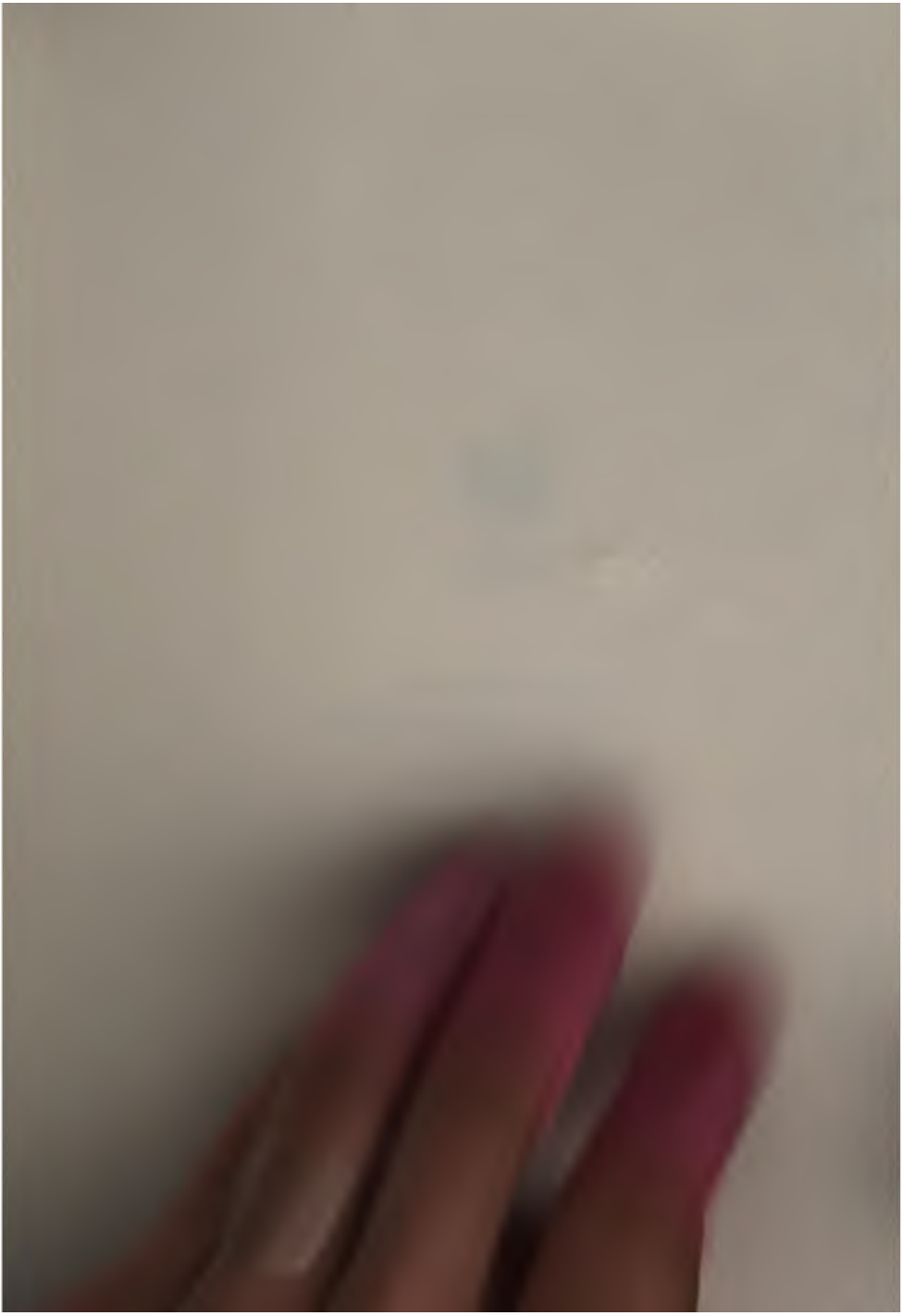

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TWO YEARS AT THE FRONT WITH THE MOUNTED INFANTRY

Bertie Moeller

Two Years at the Front

with the

Mounted Infantry

Being the Diary of

Lieutenant B. Moeller

With a Memoir by

Lieut.-Colonel L. R. C. Boyle, H.A.C.

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

THE following Diary of two years' service at the front in South Africa, ended by the lamented death of its writer, was penned by Lieutenant Bertie Moeller for his parents' perusal alone—jotted down in the midst of warfare, often in the saddle or on the veldt, without arrière pensée—*and is only now published as a memorial in response to the solicitations of friends and comrades.*

Eleven years in the Honourable Artillery Company, he showed such zeal that he soon received his commission. Indefatigable in his work for his corps, the Army List of January 7, 1899, *contains the following statement:*

'Second-Lieutenant B. Moeller, having passed in all subjects, is entitled to the letter "Q" in the Army List.'

(*Authority, War Office, S.W.*)

In December, 1899, *he volunteered for the corps of Mounted Infantry in the C.I.V. Regiment formed by the Corporation of the City of London, and acting as Adjutant to Lieutenant-Colonel Cholmondeley, his exertions greatly promoted the rapidity with which the corps of the Mounted Infantry prepared to sail on January* 13 *from Southampton. Landing in South Africa, he went through the various engagements under Lord Roberts,*

which culminated in the great march to Pretoria. Then General Mackinnon got him attached to the 7th Mounted Infantry, under Colonel Bainbridge, where he saw some of the severest fighting in the campaign.

Lieutenant Moeller's services were so thoroughly appreciated that he was selected by Lord Roberts for the honour of a commission, in the 2nd Middlesex (Duke of Cambridge's Own), a circumstance specially mentioned by His Majesty King Edward VII. when speaking, as Prince of Wales, at the Guildhall, on the occasion of the C.I.V. Banquet, in these words:

'Colonel Mackinnon . . . speaks in the highest terms . . . of Lieutenant Moeller, of the Mounted Infantry, who is to be congratulated on having been given a commission in the regular army, but who will prove a great loss to this regiment.'

In January, 1901, *Lieutenant Moeller was commissioned to form the company of Mounted Infantry of the 2nd Middlesex Regiment, and, attached to the 14th Mounted Infantry, he took part in the great drives under Generals French, Bruce-Hamilton, and others.*

It was in one of the last of these, on December 19, 1901, *that he met his death.*

The little column of 250 *men had been riding all night, when at dawn they came in conflict with a party of about* 500 *Boers, dressed in khaki. Lieutenant Moeller, having got his men in safety, was riding off, when he saw a wounded trooper, who had surrendered, being treacherously shot by the Boers. He rode to his assistance, but was quickly surrounded. He emptied the six chambers of his revolver, and threw the empty weapon in the face of the enemy, before he fell, mortally wounded, from his horse.*

They carried him to Standerton, where he lies amongst his fallen comrades.

Lieutenant Moeller was twice mentioned in despatches, and was recommended for special promotion.

Should this simple Diary fall into the hands of any outside the circle of his comrades and friends, will they make allowance for the fact that the writer was a soldier and not a penman?

NOTE.

The proceeds of the sale of this volume will be devoted to the assistance of disabled soldiers.

MEMOIR OF LIEUTENANT MOELLER

THERE is a word in the English language which those who best knew him believe aptly describes the character of the late Lieutenant Moeller, the subject of this brief memoir. That word is 'thorough.' In its highest sense it implies strenuousness, devotion to high ideals of duty, moral courage combined with physical valour.

It is more than probable that these great qualities, which were undoubtedly possessed by Bertie Moeller in a more than ordinary degree, would have been unrecognised to their fullest extent but for the South African Campaign, in which, to the deep regret of all who knew him, he met an early death. But long before the war, or any thought of war, his brother officers in the Honourable Artillery Company recognised in him a desire to live up to these ideals, and were confident that, should the occasion arise, young Moeller would play his part with credit to himself and honour to his regiment. As events turned out, this confidence was neither unjustified nor misplaced.

Bernard Moeller was born in 1872, the son of Felix Moeller, a merchant in the City of London.

His earlier years were passed in preparation for the commercial career in which it was expected his life would be passed. Like Robert Clive, extraordinary events drew him from the desk to the battlefield at

a moment's notice; but, unlike Clive, he had so trained himself in the rudiments of war that few of the young civilians who, with him, suddenly found themselves engaged as belligerents in a campaign were equally fitted for the responsible duties they were called upon to perform.

In 1891, when nineteen years of age, he joined the Honourable Artillery Company as a private. This ancient regiment still keeps up the custom of electing its officers from those who in the ranks and as non-commissioned officers have proved themselves fit for command. Young Moeller soon proved he was so fitted, and in 1896 he became a Second Lieutenant, three years later being promoted to Lieutenant.

Although nothing was more improbable than that the auxiliary forces should ever be called upon to serve at the front, Bertie Moeller believed, and acted up to his belief, that what was worth doing at all was worth doing well. The British Army—a commission in which, for various reasons, seemed completely out of his reach—was nevertheless his ideal—the noblest of lives, the grandest of professions. If becoming an officer in the regular army was denied to him, he would, he argued, at least learn what those officers learnt and know what they knew.

The dream developed into reality, reality into passion, and the acquisition of military knowledge became the all-absorbing object of his life. Nothing was left undone, no branch of military science left unexplored. Tactics, fortification, military law, organization and equipment, surveying, musketry, and riding, were one by one studied and mastered.

Nor were his commercial and social duties during these years neglected. It was during the hours of relief from the constant strain which is inseparable from assistance in the conduct of a large business that his studies were pursued. Burning the midnight oil too fiercely is not always conducive to the lightness of mind and gaiety of spirit which make a man a genial

companion. But young Moeller was the best of companions. Cheerful and happy, but never boisterous, he enjoyed life as a healthy young man of his age should enjoy it, and as a natural consequence contributed to the enjoyment of others.

Never so happy as when on parade, he was told off to train the young non-commissioned officers and prepare them for examination—a work which has been of lasting benefit to the battalion, for the non-commissioned officers are the backbone of the auxiliary forces, perhaps even more so than in the regular army. There were no more worlds to conquer—at least, so it seemed in the circumscribed vista of his horizon. But events were taking place in a far-distant portion of the Empire which were destined to divert into other and newer channels all his preconceived ideas of life, and give him the one great object of his ambition—a commission in the regular forces of the Crown.

Talking to an officer of superior rank a few months before the outbreak of the war, Moeller asked what chance there was of his being able to obtain a commission in the regular army. 'As much chance as you have of flying to the moon!' was the unstudied reply. Within the year he was already in the army, and within three years this officer was hourly dreading the news that his wounds had resulted in death.

Rare indeed are the cases in which opportunity combines with merit to satisfy the laudable cravings of a noble ambition. To young Moeller the opportunity came, and he was not the man to let it slip.

In 1899 the Boers of the Transvaal threw down the gauntlet, and challenged the British Empire to put forth its strength.

The startling events in the earlier months of the campaign are still vivid in the memory of all. Three columns operating on parallel lines, each commanded by a General of acknowledged reputation, had been roughly handled and their advance checked. It became apparent that more troops would be required to bring

the campaign to a decisive issue. Without panic the Empire set to work to supply them. Reluctantly the War Office accepted the services of the auxiliary forces, which they had previously refused, and the Lord Mayor of London undertook to equip and supply a battery of quick-firing guns, a company of Mounted Infantry, and a battalion of Infantry.

Bertie Moeller at once volunteered, was posted to the Mounted Infantry, and, accompanied by his only brother, left London in January, 1900. His diary immediately commenced, and was kept up to within a few hours of his death.

The C.I.V.—or, as they came to be nicknamed, the 'Lord Mayor's Own'—were not long in having their ears tuned to those sounds which are music to some, nerve-shattering to others, and dangerous to all.

On February 4 he enters in his diary:

> We were enlisted early in January, and we shall be up at the front within five weeks of enlistment, 7,000 miles from home, and all a good fighting lot.

It is the fashion to belittle the services of the Volunteers, but the record was no mean one, and shows the excellent spirit and indefatigable zeal which pervaded all ranks.

As a Mounted Infantryman Bertie Moeller was where he would wish to be—well in advance. To that arm was entrusted the duty of scouting for the army in the now famous march through Bloemfontein to Johannesburg and Pretoria. It was anxious and responsible work; the enemy were by no means disheartened or demoralized. They took advantage of every opportunity to act on the aggressive. It was impossible to tell if, when they made a stand, it was a feint or determination to bring on a general engagement. There was the danger of being drawn into an ambush, and, on the other hand, excessive precaution would check the advance of the largest army ever commanded by an English General. The responsibility of,

in the first instance, determining these questions devolved on the *mounted* troops.

The name or the exploits of young Moeller were rarely mentioned in the papers; but this was inevitable. His work was mainly in that part of the field where the bullet of the enemy is a far more frequent guest than the pen of the despatch-writer. He was, moreover, too junior in rank, and far too ignorant of the art of self-advertisement, to gain much press notoriety in a campaign in which over 1,000 officers were killed in action or died of wounds or disease.

He was twice mentioned in despatches, the last time after he had already died of his wounds, and had been recommended for promotion to the rank of Captain, to which his age and exceptional services gave him special claim.

The diary which is now published pretends to no literary or historic merit. It was written in letters to his mother in snatches of leisure from almost ceaseless duty, with little, if any, time for revision. Its charm lies in its candid unpretentiousness, its breezy cheerfulness, more redolent of the sea than the land forces, and its truthful record of daily work in the field. It brings the story of his life to within a few hours of his end —an end which many might envy, and which he himself would have been the last to deplore.

On the evening of December 18, 1901, a small force of 214 Mounted Infantry were told off to make a night march and surprise some farms twenty miles away, which were reported to be harbouring the enemy. It was part of a combined movement over a large area, in which Generals Spens and Plumer were taking part.

Of all the operations of war, night attacks are the most difficult and dangerous. Their object is surprise. Surprise necessitates secrecy and noiseless celerity. It is well known that the Boers were marvellously adept in gaining information of any contemplated movement of British troops. On this occasion they were not at

fault, and appear to have been as well aware of his intentions as the General himself.

In night attacks there is, moreover, always a danger of panic, due not so much to fear as to the impossibility of detecting friend from foe, and the high state of tension of men's nerves when darkness and stillness combine to make precaution doubly necessary. Columns are liable to become separated and detached, and on more than one occasion have been known to fire into each other in mistake for the enemy. For these reasons it is essential that the officer in command of the advanced guard should be cool and collected, rapid in decision, not prone to panic, and, above all, should enjoy the absolute confidence of his men.

No greater compliment could have been paid to young Moeller than that on this night-march he was given the advanced guard, on whom not only the success of the operations, but the lives of their companions, depended.

In command of about fifty men, Moeller moved off at 11 p.m. In the height of the summer it would doubtless have been a brilliant starlight night, throwing shadows from the kopjes and high hills in the background, which might easily hide a large force of the enemy. A profound stillness, broken only by the tramp of hoofs and champ of bits; orders given in whispers; no talking, and smoking absolutely prohibited. Scouts and flanking parties, with their connecting files covering the advance, guarding from surprise—every precaution taken that experience and common-sense could devise to insure success.

The young officer, proud and exultant in his pride of place, riding with the main body of the advanced guard, keen, alert, and responsive to every sound. The hours pass slowly in the monotony of the long ride; but at length, by early dawn, the farms are in sight, and all is so far well.

The main body closes up: a hurried consultation, the detachment broken up into four groups, a simultaneous

charge, and the farms are won. The quarry had flown; information in some mysterious way had cast its shadow before, and only a few Boers, cattle, and Cape carts were captured. But the object of the march had been accomplished, and the party was preparing to return to camp, when a dozen or so of Boers suddenly broke from the concealment of a donga and rode off rapidly to the right. The whole party started off in pursuit, and this seems to have been a well-planned ruse to lead them to destruction. The horses, done up after the night-march, were unequal to the contest, and the Boers easily outpaced them.

Halting on a ridge overlooking a wide track of country, the men dismounted, the heliograph was unpacked in order to open communication with Plumer. The sun was already well above the kopjes, a slight mist rising in the lower levels; all Nature was awakening, another day had dawned—the last to many a lad scarce out of his teens, whose young life was that day to ebb slowly away.

The videttes reported a group of horsemen leisurely advancing from the right front. They were dressed in khaki, many wearing helmets. Glasses were turned on them. Plumer's men, no doubt, was the satisfactory verdict; but, anyhow, British troops extended in squadrons, the officers in front walking their horses. Nearer and nearer came the group, but no cause for suspicion arose in the minds of men or officers. Nearer yet—within speaking distance now—and soon they would be clasping hands, many of the men, no doubt, rising to give them welcome.

Great God of battles and of mercy, what is this! The khaki-clad group leap from their horses and pour a murderous fire at close range upon their unsuspecting victims. Volley after volley is poured on the devoted band before they have time to recover their amazement and consternation.

Their leaders are soon struck down; dazed and giddy, men struggle to rise, only to receive more ghastly

wounds; pools of blood trickle through the dry veldt grass as some poor lad sobs himself through the very portals of eternity. A few hurried shots in return, and then a dash for safety. Nothing for it now but flight or surrender.

Forming the rearguard with his detachment, Lieutenant Moeller was about a quarter of a mile away to the left. In such awful times horses and men alike seek safety in the sympathy of their fellows. It was on this small nucleus of men, still compact and well in hand, that the scattered remnants thundered down and found relief. There were many still within the danger zone, and an attempt was made to rally and cover their retreat.

Men on limping horses, themselves scarce strong enough to keep their saddles, riding a race for life against a cheering and exultant enemy, with all the odds against them. Limping men, shattered in nerve and broken in limb, struggling and floundering in the front until some friendly bullet put an end to their sufferings; others, more fleet of foot, unhorsed, but as yet untouched, taking cover and firing rapidly to check the advance, and again retiring hurriedly to some fresh position. It was a terrible moment, and one calculated to shake the nerves of the stoutest and most experienced. In less time than it takes to describe it, one-fourth of the entire force had been wiped clean off their regimental muster-rolls, and the end was not yet.

There is courage which can bear physical torture with Spartan fortitude; there is courage which can, when necessary, steel itself to witness the sufferings of others with apparent indifference and composure; but in times of disaster, when bullets are whizzing through the air, spitting the ground into miniature furrows, and bolting men are bowled over like rabbits, it requires courage, both moral and physical, of a high order to exercise the cool judgment and rapid decision which alone can save the situation, and even then may fail.

Hang on now, you gallant Yorkshire and Middlesex

boys, if you love the honour of your regiment and value the lives of your comrades. Your safety lies in flight, but glory and, alas, death are the rewards of your valour and devotion.

With that sublime faith in his officer, the product of discipline and experience, which is part of Tommy's creed, and which, thank God, is rarely misplaced, the boys hung on. Opening fire so soon as their front was cleared, the onslaught was checked, and many a man owes his life to-day to that gallant stand.

But it could not last—ammunition was getting low; the victorious enemy were vigorously closing on the small group. It was time to be up, and to retire, and that as rapidly as possible. It was at this moment that young Bertie Moeller received the wounds that four days later closed an exceptionally brilliant career. He had come out of the ordeal unscathed, he had shown cool, well-calculated judgment at a moment of intense anxiety and excitement, and his reputation as a leader of men could never hereafter be challenged. He gave the order to mount and gallop. Looking back, he saw to his horror a wounded lad, with his hands up in token of surrender, treacherously shot by Boers. It was more than his pent-up agony could stand. 'You cowards!' he shouted, and, dashing forward, fired his revolver at the assailants. He was immediately surrounded by thirteen or fourteen of the enemy.

Death, yes, but surrender never! Emptying his revolver and charging into their midst, he flung the empty weapon into the face of the nearest, and as they opened fire fell from his horse wounded and bleeding to the ground.

It was only an incident, and there were many such in the last stages of a campaign which a high legal dignitary has described as 'a war that is not a war' whatever that may mean. But these incidents are described and discussed over camp-fires in lonely bivouacs, and become treasured memories to others than those only who witnessed them; they add to the

list of actions, already long, which shed lustre on the British arms; they excite the admiration and emulation of faltering spirits in the hours of danger; they are retold to cheer drooping spirits amidst scenes of agony and distress which ever march hand-in-hand with glory; they give an example of courage and devotion which strikes deep down into the souls of men, and makes them better for the striking; they are the answer, if answer be needed, to those who claim that the noble youth of this country lack the qualities of their forbears.

The young officer was carried into camp, and moved next day to Standerton. But his case was hopeless, and on December 23 his struggles were over and his end peace. He was buried with military honours in the small churchyard, surrounded by many of his comrades.

His bones rest in a far-off grave, but his memory lives in the hearts of those who on the field of battle had learnt to appreciate his sterling worth. In many a modest London home, in many a Northern hamlet, there are those who shared his labours, his sufferings and privations, and who love to tell the story of how the gallant Bertie Moeller lived to gain the affection of his comrades, and died the death of a hero and a soldier.

LIONEL R. C. BOYLE,
Lieutenant-Colonel, H.A.C.

March 16, 1903.

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TWO YEARS AT THE FRONT

PART I

WITH THE C.I.V. M.I.—THE JOURNEY FROM SOUTHAMPTON TO CAPE TOWN.

R.M.S. Briton, January 16, 1900.

To-morrow morning, at 2 a.m., we are due at Madeira, where all letters are to be posted, so I am writing to say how things have been going with us since we left. The last you saw of us was early Saturday morning at Bunhill Row. We marched to Nine Elms Station—about four miles. I shall never forget that march! The streets were packed the whole way twenty deep, and we simply had to fight our way through. We got a mighty reception from the crowd, and every here and there were friends saying their last good-bye. It was a somewhat mistaken kindness, for it took us four solid hours to reach Nine Elms. At several places along the route were H.A.C. friends, who gave us a fire, which we returned. At Nine Elms Station we entrained for Southampton. We reached Southampton at 12.30, and embarked on the *Briton*. She is a magnificent boat, 10,000 tons, and beautifully fitted up.

Here again were many friends to wish us good-bye. I received thirty telegrams from all members of the H.A.C. and other friends. The scene when the vessel moved off was most impressive. On deck were all the passengers and troops cheering, and on the landing-

stage were 5,000 people, cheering and waving their handkerchiefs till we moved out of sight.

On Sunday we were in the Bay, and most of us, men and officers, were more or less *hors de combat.* There was a heavy swell from the Atlantic, and the vessel rolled heavily all day. Sunday evening I recovered, and was quite fit and well, and able to enjoy my dinner. The men are all placed in the troop-deck astern. It is a somewhat rough life for them. The programme for them is:

7. Reveille.
7.30. Clean decks (swabbers).
7.45. Draw rations.
8. Breakfast (fish, coffee, bread, butter, jam).
8.30. Mount guard.
10 to 12. Parade (physical exercise).
12.30. Dinner (meat, vegetables, and pudding).
2 to 4. Parade (physical exercise).
5. Tea and supper.
8.30. Lights out.
9.30. Lie down.

We officers, of course, have a splendid time of it. We each have a cabin saloon, and live on the very best. I go and see all my men every day several times, and manage to smuggle a few luxuries over—such as apples and fruit—which are very welcome. All my detachment were more or less ill.

Monday was a repetition, except that most of us had found our sea-legs and were going strong. By the way, Lord Rosslyn is on board, going out as a war correspondent. What seems to impress the passengers is that the majority of the fellows are gentlemen.

Tuesday.—To-day the weather is magnificent. We are about due west of North Coast of Africa; blue sky, warm, and sea smooth. Everybody is fit and well, and in the best of spirits. In spite of all the hardships my men have had, I have not heard a grumble anywhere. They all seem to like me, and would really do anything

for me. My fellow-officers are extremely good fellows; they are: Colonel Cholmondeley, Captain Reid (my Captain), Captain Waterlow, and Lieutenants Manisty, Wilson, and Berry. We also have Sergeant-Major Rouse, who is one of the finest instructors of Mounted Infantry in the kingdom. Two hundred and fifty of us are in the *Briton*, and 250 in the *Garth Castle*.

Altogether, I am awfully happy and in the very best of spirits. A soldier's life suits me down to the ground.

I am intensely proud of going with the C.I.V. M.I.; I feel it a great honour, and you may trust me that I will do my level best to deserve it.

S.S. Briton, January 17.

I wrote my last letter just before reaching Madeira. We arrived there Wednesday morning at 2.30 a.m. Going on deck, we saw Madeira rising high out of the water on the starboard side. It was a fine sight. The lights of the town were twinkling against a background of hills, lit up by a brilliant moon. On the port side were several steamers and yachts at anchor. Next morning was a brilliant one—clear blue sky, and a rising sun. The island presented a most beautiful picture. In the foreground the town is mainly composed of white houses with latticed windows, and then there rises terrace upon terrace of greensward, with white villas studded here and there among a mass of lovely blossoms of magnolia and other flowering shrubs. Behind all are the high hills. On deck were many native vendors of laces and all kinds of little knick-knacks. All round the ship was a regular babel of voices of people in small dinghys. We had five hours in Madeira, and we landed—men, passengers, and officers. Madeira is Portuguese, and the inhabitants are mostly Portuguese. We walked round the town, which is paved with small stones. Traffic is all on greased sleighs, drawn by oxen. It is beautiful, I believe, inland; but we had not time to go. We all got into boats again and returned to the *Briton*. At 11.30 p.m.

we sailed off. On leaving, the *Norham Castle* came in on her homeward voyage. The temperature was very warm and enervating (sun rises 6 o'clock, sets 5.30). We had various drills and lectures on board during the day. All the men are fit and well, and getting as brown as berries.

January 18.—The steward turned us out at 6 o'clock, and I saw one of the most beautiful spectacles I have ever witnessed in all my life. Fifteen miles away, on the port side, rose a magnificent mountain, 15,000 feet high, out of the water; the top was a rosy pink with the reflection of the rising sun; the sea beneath was deep blue. This was Teneriffe. I sat down and thought to myself what a beautiful world it all is! I also thought many serious things, needless to repeat here.

We drilled again, and had lectures the greater part of the day. The weather is getting hot, with a tropical sun; there are no clouds and no ships! I have begun to give my men a friendly lecture for an hour every evening on useful subjects, such as fire discipline, musketry, reconnaissance and other matters. I fancy they are popular. I make them very friendly, and allow the men to smoke and sit down. A great many fellows from other sections come as well.

January 19.—To-day is a repetition of yesterday, except that we passed the *Arundel Castle* on the way home, and one or two transports. Weather hotter, with a clear sky and smooth sea. Everything on board is most luxurious; the eatables are first-rate; in fact, one lives like a fighting-cock. The baths are the best of all—sea-water in white marble basins. We have our port-holes open, and I spend some time every evening looking out.

This afternoon I, three other officers, and all my men have been inoculated against enteric. We shall all be laid up to-morrow for twenty-four hours. We were inoculated at 4.30; at 6.30 we were mostly feverish and very stiff. There are some delightful people on

board, amongst others Brigadier-General Wavell and Lord Algernon Lennox.

January 20.—Woke up very stiff and feverish, but got up and dressed. Excused all parades; sat about deck learning up drill and other things. All my men more or less in the same feverish condition. After dinner there was a dance, but unfortunately I and my brother officers who were inoculated had to sit still. Weather blazing hot, easterly wind off Africa.

January 21.—Woke up fit, but a little weak. All my men are much better. It is still hotter—only 12° above the equator. Tropical sun, leaden blue sky and light blue sea. Plenty of flying-fish. All the men and women are dressed in white ducks, also the Captain and ship's officer. At 10.30 we had service on board. It was very impressive; the Captain took the service, all the men and officers and ship's passengers being present.

Such a pity! One poor chap in the Inns of Court Volunteers, who is with us in the C.I.V., is down with double pneumonia. He is slightly better to-day, and the doctor hopes to pull him through. Every day from thirty to forty men are inoculated. The fever starts almost at once, and lasts from twenty-four to forty-eight hours.

Every day at noon the ship's officers take bearings of the sun, to find out the exact spot the ship is in on the earth's surface. This is done by laying off angles; they also get exact time and true North and South.

Monday night there is to be a concert, Tuesday and Wednesday sports, open to the whole ship. We are all more friendly; everybody is beginning to know everybody else, and altogether it is a delightful time. I forgot to tell you that the ship's band plays after lunch, also in the evening.

January 22.—Temperature 85° in the shade. The Colonel and officers went to see the men at dinner at 12.30 to-day. All seem as happy as possible. They

are divided up into messes of eighteen to twenty men. Two mess orderlies are appointed each day for each mess; they fetch rations, carve the meat, etc. To-day Dick and Nesham are mess orderlies. Curious to see Dick in his shirt-sleeves fetching rations and carving away. They all feed very well: they have large mugs of soup and bread; there is a big joint for each mess (good meat), good vegetables, and pudding (plain food, but excellent and strengthening).

Woke up quite fit and well; all my men are much better, too. Had usual parades. Lord Rosslyn is going out as special correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, probably to Kimberley. He is also taking snapshot photographs for a new illustrated paper coming out shortly, called the *Sphere*. You might get it.

In the evening we had a concert, which was very good. You will be glad to hear that Dick played the 'Cavatina,' and it went down very well. Unfortunately the concert was broken up, as Colour-Sergeant Gibbons, who is down with double pneumonia, was in such a critical state that he was not expected to live. This cast a great gloom over us all. I must tell you something about him. Gibbons was a barrister in London, and a Captain in the Inns of Court, but in order to come out to South Africa he enlisted as a private. Then he was made Colour-Sergeant of No. 2 Company. All this was very sportsmanlike of him. When he first came under my notice at Bunhill Row, he appeared to me to be an extremely nice fellow, a good soldier, and well up to his work. The last time I saw him was last Thursday, the 18th, when he was in hospital with a bad feverish cold. I was orderly officer for the day, and thought the poor chap looked ill then.

Tuesday, January 23.—Weather blazing hot. Drilled all the morning. Crossed the equator at 12.30 this morning. In the afternoon we had sports on board. Dick just missed the 100 yards by 6 inches. I came in second for the potato race, and got a prize. We had cock-fighting and several other things. I must tell you

that my tug-of-war team won every heat, but were beaten in the final by the team representing first-class passengers. It was after a hard struggle though. They would have won, but they had pulled so often during the day against other regimental teams that they were very fagged at the final heat. They were the best team in the Mounted Infantry, and the best on board ship. I gave them all a tea afterwards.

Poor Gibbons died at 6.30 this evening, after a fine struggle to live. This is our first casualty. He was very popular with officers and men, and we are all very cut up.

Wednesday, January 24.—Poor Gibbons was buried this morning with full military honours. We were all in review order, officers with black arm-bands. The troops lined the hurricane-deck on both sides. The General and his A.D.C. also came in uniform. At 10 o'clock we were called to attention. The ship's band played the funeral march. Right from aft six sailors brought the body, sewn up in a hammock with the Union Jack wound round; on top were belt, hat, and side-arms. All the non-commissioned officers were bearers. Then came the Colonel, also the General, then the firing-party, composed of the dead man's comrades from his own battalion (the Inns of Court), then the remainder of poor Gibbons' company, also all unattached troops coming out. As the body passed (the troops lining the sides, of which my section formed part), we came to attention, and the officers paid their last respect to the dead by saluting the body. The firing-party went with reversed arms. In the centre of the ship, on the port side, the body was placed on a sliding-board. Then the funeral service was read by the Colonel. At 11.30 the body was dropped overboard, during which sad function the engines of the ship stopped, and the firing-party fired three volleys. All was then over. The band struck up a lively military march, and everyone marched off.

January 25.—The weather keeps beautifully fine, not too hot, and the sea is very smooth. In the morning we had various drills. In the afternoon we finished the sports. I went in for the sack-race, and came in second only in my heat. O'Connell won an event called 'slinging the monkey.' We are all well on board. In the evening we gave a select dinner-party, and invited the General, Lord Rosslyn, and several ladies on board. Amongst the ladies is Lady Douglas Straight. One of the nicest fellows on board ship is Captain Davidson, A.D.C. to the General. I have had a lot of chats with him. After the dinner, which was a great success and very jolly, we had the remainder of the concert. Dick played again on the violin, Handel's 'Largo,' which went down very well. He played it A1. After the concert the prizes were distributed; I got a pocket-knife and 10s. (the latter I returned for Orphans and Widows' Fund). I don't know whether I have told you or not, but our Adjutant's wife is on board. She is a jolly little woman and a regular sportswoman. She only came to see her husband off, but suddenly, on the spur of the moment, she made up her mind to come with us. She always sits with us at mess; in fact, she belongs to the regiment.

January 26.—Had usual parades this morning. Sighted the *Manchester City*, heaved to, and received the welcome intelligence that Ladysmith was relieved! A mighty cheer went up over the ocean from our boat. This is really good news! Of course I hope everything will go well for us, but I should like to see some fighting, and it would be a pity if everything is all over by the time we reach Cape Town on Monday afternoon. This evening we had a fancy-dress ball, which was rather fun. Most of the passengers except the officers turned out in all kinds of fancy-dress, got up on the spur of the moment.

January 27.—To-day was a competition of sub-sections (four men) for a prize of £10 given by General Wavell. I had trained all my eleven sub-sections for

the competition for the last three days. The competition was to fire volleys at a certain place on the ship; then to double to another place and fire again; then double to a saddled horse, mount and dismount; then go to another place and answer questions on bugle-calls and Baden-Powell's book on scouting. Unfortunately my section were ordered to parade first. The whole eleven sub-sections did fairly, but not well enough to win. I had nothing to do with it after they had paraded, as it lay with each sub-section commander. I was a judge at one place, and timed each sub-section. The winning sub-section comprised four London Scottish men, who were first-rate; they were, however, the last to go in the afternoon, and, of course, had all the experience of seeing where the others had failed. First, second, and third all came from the last sub-sections—— Confound! there goes the fire-alarm! . . . Just returned. Fire-alarm went on high, ship's fire-bell went, and syren sounded; everybody—soldiers, crew, ship's officers, stewards—all darted to their stations. Our station is on the starboard side of main-deck, abaft of the second-class saloon door. Glad to say it was only a false alarm, done for practice.

There are several war-correspondents on board.

This evening after dinner the C.I.V. M.I. gave a smoking concert to the ship on the first-class saloon deck. This was a great success, for we have a lot of talent amongst our fellows. Everybody thought it was one of the best concerts they had ever heard. A good many fellows in my section performed. The weather remains beautifully fine—smooth and warm. It is summer here. The sun rises at five o'clock and sets at seven. The stars are very different. One cannot see the Great Bear, or Polar Star. However, what we can see is the Southern Cross, which gives true South. It is this shape:

* *

* *

There are also some large brilliant stars whose names I don't know.

January 28.—Again it is beautifully fine—blue sky, deep blue sea, and warm. To-day being Sunday, we had Church parade, otherwise I have nothing much to tell you. To-morrow afternoon we reach Cape Town. Since sighting Teneriffe Peak, we have not seen a vestige of land for over a week, and precious few ships. All my boys are fit and well; some of us are much more round the chest with the physical exercise we have done, and we mostly look bronzed and well.

January 29.—Had early morning parade at 6.30 for packing up kits. All getting ready for departure. At 10.30 a.m. we saw the first strip of land of South Africa. We shall probably be in between two and three this afternoon. I am in command of the baggage guard, so shall have plenty to do. Beautiful weather, hot and clear. The coast is getting more defined and looks rugged. For the first time we see plenty of sea-gulls and other water-fowl flying about. All are well on board. I shall close this letter now. It has been a most enjoyable voyage, and I have made several friends. I am sending you a photograph of the officers; it is not good, but you may like to have it. We passed the *Gascon* yesterday evening at 6 p.m., and she signalled, 'No news of any importance.' So, apparently, there is nothing fresh.

Greenpoint Camp, Cape Town, February 6.

On January 31 we sighted Cape Town at about 2.30. At three o'clock we were close in, and the scenery was marvellous. Cape Town lies at the bottom of Table Mountain, a huge precipitous rock 4,000 feet high. On the left are several peaks; on the right was the harbour full of ships. There were the *Umbria*, *Germanic*, *Majestic*, *Nomadic*, *Tantallon Castle*, and many others. We dropped General Wavell and his A.D.C. on a special tug; three hearty cheers accompanied him as he left. It was altogether a wonderful sight, with the

ships, the blue sky, and the burning sun. At four o'clock we got into harbour, and I immediately got my men out and commenced unloading our stores. They worked with a will. While we were unloading Lord Roberts came along and had a look at us. (You remember he gave me those seven razors.) At eleven o'clock we turned in.

February 1.—At 9.30 we landed and marched to our camp. It was a sight worth seeing—all our boys fit and well and bronzed up. We reached camp, and immediately started pitching our tents. We finished it all by five o'clock. We are camping on a common between the sea and Table Mountain. I tell you, it is extraordinary—the air is most invigorating, and although it is blazing hot one does not feel it. Table Mountain is a sight! Whenever the wind is south-east great white clouds come over the top and envelop it like a table-cloth over a table. When the sun sets the clouds flush rose-pink. Far away on the east are the Blauwberg Mountains, which are magnificent; in front is the harbour with all the ships.

February 2.—We live in tents. Officers have one apiece; for the men, twelve are in one tent. Feeding, plain but good; men and officers fare almost alike. There are plenty of rats and snakes. Last night a snake was curled up in one of my fellows' bed, but he got his bayonet and slew it. They are not poisonous, however. Meanwhile, we are infested with rats everywhere!

February 3.—Drew horses to-day; fine, good horses. My section are all mounted on greys. I have a good horse myself.

February 4.—Had riding parades. The men are working hard, and getting fit. Routine:

Reveille, 5.30.
Stables, 6.
Breakfast, 7.15.
Mounted parade, 9.
Water and feed horses, 12.
Mounted parade with rifles, 2.30.
Water and feed horses, 5.

Everybody works from 5.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. By the way, Lord Roberts inspected us yesterday. He was delighted with our appearance, and told Colonel Cholmondeley that we are to go to the front as soon as we are ready. We go up to the front next Friday, in all probability to the Orange River. Lord Roberts made a long speech, which you will see in the papers. He is splendid, as hard as nails; all the soldiers love him. He meets every ship that comes in, and inspects the troops arrived. Lord Kitchener was with Lord Roberts when he inspected us. He is doing all organization and transport, etc.

All the officers carry rifles and bayonets on horseback, the same as the men. All are in the pink of condition and ready for anything. We are the best mounted of all the Mounted Infantry going up to the front; in fact, it is a record for troops. We were enlisted early in January, and we shall be up at the front within five weeks of enlistment—7,000 miles from home, and all a good fighting lot! We shall render a good account of ourselves, I am certain of that. Colonel Cholmondeley said to me last night that, had it not been for my hard work, we should never have got off so early, nor would they either. Lord Roberts has told us we shall get plenty of fighting. We are not waiting for the artillery or infantry, but going on alone, to be brigaded with a Mounted Infantry Brigade. Lord Roberts is going up to Orange River, I believe, as well, with a flying column. The idea, I think, is to go straight on to Bloemfontein, then higher up, in order to draw the Boers away from Modder River and Ladysmith. You can imagine my surprise when I arrived in Cape Town and found that Ladysmith was not relieved after all; that Warren had crossed the Tugela, but had had to recross with a heavy loss—1,700 killed and wounded. I am trying to send you a photo of Lord Roberts inspecting us. My section came out well.

PART II

FROM CAPE TOWN TO PRETORIA, UNDER LORD ROBERTS.

Train No. 507, *between Cape Town and Orange River.*

The last letter I wrote was on Wednesday last, February 7. I posted it at 10.30 a.m.

Wednesday, February 7.—Owing to having had a lot of rain to-day, and the horse-blankets being soaking wet, we had no riding parades. We, however, packed up all our kit, and saw that each man under us had his complete. The *Kinfauns Castle* came in to-day, with Captain Bailey, the Adjutant of the infantry battalion and one and a half companies. Yesterday, if I am not mistaken in the dates, the *Garth Castle* came in with one company under Captain Shipley. Late in the afternoon it became fine. All men fit, except three men down with scarlet fever. Nesham, one of my boys—brother to Nesham in the 21st Lancers—was bucked off his horse and hurt the ligaments of his arm. I am taking him up, however. To-day his arm is much better.

Thursday, February 8.—Reveille, 4.30; stables, 5; saddle up, full marching order, at 6; breakfast, 7; parade at 7.45. We were inspected by the Governor, Sir Alfred Milner. He seemed very pleased with us, called up all the officers and congratulated them, and wished us all 'God-speed.' He is a quiet, sallow-faced man, with a determined mouth and a slight, dark moustache.

The remainder of the day we packed up our kits. I was photographed to-day on my grey, and so was all

my section. I have paid for and sent home four copies of myself, four of my section, and two of inspection by Lord Roberts. The photographer has promised faithfully to send them.

Our greys are to be painted khaki colour up at the Orange River. You will be glad to hear that my section is the best mounted; I picked the horses for them, and I myself have two beauties—a grey and a capital bay.

Friday, January 9.—Reveille at 5; stables at 5.30; saddle up, 10, full marching order, preparatory to departure. At 12.30 we were all saddled up, and at 1 o'clock we left camp for the front, taken in by two bands. Both men and horses look magnificent, and I was proud of being one of them. My section—the Greys—leads the regiment. We marched off, 250 strong and 260 horses, all fit. Unfortunately influenza has been running through the horses; twenty-seven had to be cast and replaced; but to-day all are well. The whole camp turned out to bid us good-bye, and cheered like mad. It is about three miles to the station. It was blazing hot, and there were enormous crowds, composed of blacks, English, Dutch, Boers, Germans, French, Turks—in fact, all sorts. When we came to the better parts of Cape Town we got an enormous reception. I shall never forget it. . . . We go up in two trains, men and horses, eleven horses to a truck, eight men to a third compartment, and four officers in first compartment. The men's carriages are very comfortable—six beds in each, two men taking turns to sit up. It was a tremendous job getting the horses in. Before leaving the Mayor made a speech, and Colonel Cholmondeley replied; every man was given lemonade and biscuits *ad lib.* We started at 2.30. At every station we had an enormous reception, each man getting lots of grapes and peaches. At Lady Grey all the ladies were at the station, and had tea ready for us, with fruit and cakes, mostly Dutch and English. All along the railway are patrols of Duke of Edin-

burgh's Cape Volunteers and Cape Highlanders. Every bridge, cutting and culvert is guarded. Each company of 100 men has 20 miles to look after. The men in both these regiments are fine and serviceable looking, and they all give us a hearty welcome as we go along. At 9 we went through Hex Pass, Blauwberg Mountains. Marvellous scenery. The moon was shining upon the river as it meandered through the pass, and light white silvery clouds were floating amongst the mountain-tops. Wonderful! The following is a summary of our force: Lieutenant-Colonel Cholmondeley, Captain Bell, Veterinary-Lieutenant Mulvey. No. 1 Company: Captain Reid; No. 1 Section: Forty-five men, Lieutenant Moeller; No. 2 Section: Forty-five men, Lieutenant Berry; No. 3 Section: Forty men, Lieutenant Brailey; No. 4 Section: Forty-five men, Lieutenant Wilson. No. 2 Company: Captain Waterlow; No. 1 Section: Forty men, Lieutenant Manisty; No. 2 Section: Forty men, Lieutenant Concannon; Second Master, Lieutenant Ridler.

I can't say absolutely for certain, but I believe we are hurried forward to form the 9th regiment of a division of 16,000 men (Mounted Infantry, cavalry, and Horse Artillery) to make a rush for Bloemfontein. I am glad I am with the mounted detachment. The remaining two sections (No. 2 Company) are being organized and equipped as fast as possible, and will be sent up shortly. They are No. 3 Section, under Lieutenant Henderson. I am almost certain this is correct. The Colonel said so, and he knows. I only hope our horses will carry us, as we shall have some long marches. At 10 this evening we watered and fed the horses in the trucks. Looking after so many horses, and seeing all their various ailments, I have learnt an enormous lot; in fact, every day I am learning new things. What a good thing it is that I have passed all my exams! Everything comes in handy.

February 10.—Woke at 5. The country is bleak,

rugged, yellow, green, brown, and a succession of ridges, hills, and mountains. The train curls in and out of these latter like a snake. At Matjesfontein we had a halt of an hour. Breakfast for everybody, and water and fed horses. A Mr. Logan, who owns this place, gave us our breakfast gratis, and very excellent it was, too! The men had coffee, corned beef, bread, butter, and jam.

It is blazing hot, with a clear blue sky and a marvellously clear atmosphere. I can see now how difficult it is to attack anywhere at all. The country is simply made for defence, with its succession of ridges, kopjes and brushwood, and its clear atmosphere. No wonder we lose so many men! A hundred men, well posted on a ridge, could make it pretty hot for a whole battalion! It is midsummer here; the sun rises at 5 and sets at 7.45. There is a cool, soft breeze. We shall probably be at our destination to-morrow evening.

Camp outside Jacobsdal, February 18.

To-day (Sunday) I occupy the first few minutes I have to myself in writing to you.

We disentrained at Enslin at 2.30 a.m. As we arrived, a large body of troops and transport were leaving for Modder River. We encamped for the night. A lot of horses got loose at 5 a.m., and followed the column. I saddled as many men as I could get, and brought twenty-one out of twenty-five back. In the evening we had orders to proceed as a left flank guard to General Macdonald (Highland Brigade). We saddled up at 3 o'clock, and as soon as we got clear of the camp we started forming the left flank guard five miles clear of the main body. My section was the first section of the flank. No enemy seen! Reconnoitred all kopjes, etc. We reached our next camp—Ramdam—ten miles off, at 12. A lot of my men were missing. The heat was intense. Thunderstorms and red sandstorms; everything was choked in dust.

I am anxious about Dick, Lewis, and two others. I have been out to reconnoitre for them. No sign! Heavy firing in direction of Riet River. Very anxious! Went to bed. Heavy duststorm, everything covered, terrific heat. Of course, we sleep on our blankets in the sand; we are all on half-rations; food is scarce both for men and horses, but all are cheerful. I awoke at 4, and went to my section. Dick arrived at 1.30; he had lost his way, and had been right over to Riet River, where the battle was. He had been in the saddle eighteen hours on two biscuits and his water-bottle. I was glad to see him back; fed him and his horse, etc. Left at 4 for the next camp. The C.I.V. M.I. formed advanced guard. I had the leading section as advanced line of scouts. . . . Reconnoitred everywhere. Blazing heat! Reached our next camp, Waterval Drift, at 12, and watered the horses in Riet River. We also drank out of it ourselves, for we had a big thirst on. Being Mounted Infantry we are always divisional troops, and have a tremendous lot to do. General Macdonald is our General.

Left early next morning, at 4 a.m., for next camp.

This time we are rear and baggage guard together with the Gordon Highlanders. No enemy. Reached next camp—Wegdrai Drift, Riet River—at 11 o'clock. A huge camp; Lord Roberts and staff. No sooner had we arrived than we received an order to saddle up immediately, to proceed to Jacobsdal, reconnoitre, and if possible open up communication with Lord Methuen at Modder. Jacobsdal was supposed to be flying the white flag. My section formed the advance-guard; H.A.C. skirmishing scouts with other half-section (2nd Middlesex Artillery and Queen's Westminsters) in support. We were fired at. Had orders not to return fire. Passed cavalry horses shot. More firing! My front, with advanced scouts, was about two miles. Signalled to close in and dismount, also sent back for supports, No. 3 in each subsection to hold

horses. Advanced cautiously, and got under cover behind ant-heaps. Passed on word to commence firing independently as soon as enemy showed himself. More firing. We then started at about 1,200 yards and advanced. No volleys; independent firing is better. The bullets were falling fast and thick. On our left No. 1 Section, No. 2 Company, rode up too far. A perfect hail of bullets met them, and five horses were shot. Sergeant-Major Rouse fell shot in the knee (rather critical). However, we brought a cross-fire on them. The Boers were shooting well; four bullets went close by me in a second as I signalled 'Advance!' I dropped like a stone. All the men advanced, dropped, and fired lying. The artillery and machine-guns opened fire. Nesham, H.A.C., was shot through the arm; only a slight flesh wound, however. He is a fine, plucky chap. The Boers retreated. At 5 o'clock we entered Jacobsdal; H.A.C. first in on left side, but Shropshires before us on right. Hoisted down Boer flag. Not a bad place. Cossack posts thrown out. Met a Boer ambulance with German doctors. Very nice men; spoke to them. We are now under General Wavell, whom we met on board ship. Next day I had orders to get in all our oxen and sheep, as the enemy is trying to get them. I got in any amount, but saw no enemy. Lewis, H.A.C., turned up. Kimberley is relieved, and the C.I.V. had a share in it! We are remaining here, our duties all day and night with outposts, reconnoitring, looking after the cattle and our enemy. Fourteen Boer ambulances came through my post, also seven Boer deserters. We have no further orders yet. I hear that Waterval Drift has been attacked; fear that Lieutenant Wilson, also Hazell Watson, Harley Mason and others are left behind, prisoners.

Convoy taken with 140,000 rations; men and horses are all on half-rations, but all are cheerful and confident. Although these are hard times, I am enjoying the fun. I have lost nearly all my kit. My bay horse

has been poleaxed (inflammation of lungs). Cronje beaten, and retreat cut off to Bloemfontein by French. The heat is terrific!

Stinkfontein Camp, Thursday, February 22.

To-day I am camp orderly officer, so have time again to write you a few lines. The last time I wrote was from Jacobsdal Camp. At that time we were under General Wavell. The whole division got orders to move on the 19th at 9 o'clock at night. My section formed the advance-guard and scouts. This was the first night-march I have experienced. I had orders to march north-east by road on the south, taking direction by Southern Cross, and to keep a sharp look-out for the enemy. Later on, at 3.30 a.m., I had orders to march on a large kopje in the far distance. Arrived at 5.30, all sound. In all we marched twenty miles; our destination Klip Drift. Here the column halted, bivouacked, and breakfasted. It was very hot, and there was no enemy in sight. Methuen's division was close by on the other side of the Modder River. We moved off again about 1.30. I was made rear-guard to Naval Brigade, and two 4·7 guns and two 40-lb. guns; had also to skirmish. We came across occasional small parties of the enemy and a few snipers. No casualties. Orders were not to become engaged unless absolutely compelled to. There were duststorms, it was fearfully hot, and horses and men were both pretty tired. We reached our destination, Paardeberg village, at 7. A huge divisional camp. Battles have been fought all along here. We saw a number of dead horses and mules. Paardeberg is fertile, with trees, cactus, etc. It is the first fertile place I have seen for days. I am very weary—dog-tired! Scouting is exciting enough, but tiring work for both eyes and nerves. We encamped for the night and slept. A big battle fought; Cronje and 19,000 Boers hemmed in the kopjes at Stinkfontein by French, Gatacre, Methuen, and Col-

vile, all under Kitchener. Awakened by heavy gun-firing. Moved off here. Artillery battle going on. Encamped—no tents, of course; just in the open air. We are still on half-rations. Macdonald made a night attack, got wounded, and lost 1,000 men in Scotch Brigade. Seaforths several officers wounded, two killed. The Boers lost 700 killed. They throw their dead bodies in the river. Very sad to see the wounded and dead coming in all day long, and the burial-parties. We are now attached to the Headquarter Staff. Better grub! The troops are drawing nearer and nearer to Cronje. He won't surrender, plucky chap! Sure to be a big fight to-morrow. I shall probably be in it; I hope so! There are blazing hot duststorms. The men and horses are all well, and I am in the best of health, and going strong. You will probably know far more news about the war than I do, for we can hear nothing here, the camp is too large. Heavy firing all day, lyddite shells, etc. We see 'em burst. I am writing this letter in a duststorm; they are really awful! Nearly all the other men have gone out to graze horses and get grass. As orderly officer I have to remain in camp. I am looking forward to to-morrow. Nixon, who was one of the orderlies supplied by us to General Macdonald, was shot in the chest during the last battle, and has been sent to Cape Town.

February 23.—Directly after I had finished yesterday's letter a heavy thunderstorm came on with an enormous downpour of rain; everything was drenched! It lasted till late at night. We passed a wet night in wet blankets and clothes. To-day our Quartermaster, Ridler, with Duffit and Loder, rejoined us from Enslin, but brought no tent. All cleaned up and dried our things this morning and cleaned our rifles. Heavy artillery-firing all night. Cronje is said to have reinforcements trying to come up. It is reported that French and a flying column are on their way to Bloemfontein. No fight to-day; Modder River swollen. The Boer trenches are said to be full of water. I have been out with party feeding

and grazing horses. Captain Reid is still away at Kimberley, and I am in command of No. 1 Company. The weather is fine and cooler. We forded Modder River with the horses. There was good grazing the other side. Just returned, and hear that the mail is going at once.

Stinkfontein Camp, Majuba Day,
February 26, 1900.

Yesterday at noon we suddenly got orders to saddle up, take two days' rations and ammunition, and march off at 3.15. We did so, and joined the cavalry and Mounted Infantry Brigade. Cronje and his men were supposed to try to effect an escape to join Botha, who has a large commando six miles away of 9,000 men. We reached our destination 3,000 yards south of Boer entrenchments on the Modder River, dismounted at 6 o'clock, and left our horses under cover behind a large kopje. All the men, except the No. 3's, who took charge of the horses, went out in front. There were the following: Nesbitt's Horse, Kitchener's Horse, Canadians, New Zealanders, Composite Regiment of Lancers, Household Cavalry, and others. We formed a huge picket-line round Cronje from river-bank to river-bank. I reached my position at 7 p.m.; my picket was No. 5. I was awake all night; it was most exciting. At 2.30 a.m. there was heavy rifle-firing on my left. We were only 1,200 yards from Boer entrenchments. The howitzers were going all night. It was fine weather, with moonlight; there was a heavy dew, and it was cool. At 4.30—just before dawn—we got orders to retire on our horses. On our march back to camp we heard that Cronje had surrendered with 3,000 men; the remainder got away or deserted. Cronje is in camp here now. He is a fine middle-aged man, with a dark beard, seemingly about forty. He has his wife with him. He ate a huge breakfast this morning. Lord Roberts is still here. I

came back to camp, and had orders to remain saddled to attack Botha and his 9,000 men. May get orders any minute. More fighting. All are in best of spirits. There is better grub now for officers and men, and all seem keen on fighting. The H.A.C. are going strong, as well as the remainder of my section. The horses are in a bad way, though, through bad water; several have died. My grey got cold. I hope he is all right. We may probably get about 100 remounts from the Boer prisoners. The life here, although pretty hard, suits me down to the ground, but we want more fighting. We can't complain, though, as we had plenty at Jacobsdal. The last three nights and days before yesterday have been soaking wet, but it is now fine, dry, and hot. Nothing to relate otherwise, except that the day before yesterday, while examining horses and men, Lord Roberts came up unexpectedly, dismounted, and came down my lines. He is a fine fellow! Kitchener, I believe, is forming a division at Naauwpoort for Bloemfontein. Just heard I have to escort the Boer prisoners to Modder River—100 men under Captain Waterlow and 4 subalterns and 4,000 prisoners.

Modder River Camp, March 2, 1900.

I wrote last on February 26; I will now continue my letter. I had command of the mounted escort for the 4,300 prisoners. Captain Waterlow, with Lieutenants Manisty and Concannon and fifty men, was in command of the mounted escort for Cronje, his wife, and seven others. I had under me Lieutenant Barry and fifty-six men. We fell in at 2.30, and I reported to the Commander of the whole escort (Lord Erroll, of the Blues, late A.D.C. to Lord Wolseley). I had orders to furnish advance-guard and escort for the mounted Boer prisoners. These mounted Boers were all the Commanders and Field-Cornets, about fifty men and horses. Amongst them were Major Albrecht, the Commander of Artillery, General Woulmerans, and

Lieutenant Von Ersenstein (German army). Well, we started off at 3 p.m. The dismounted Boers were escorted by the whole Gloucester Battalion. It was a marvellous sight—the bare veldt, with kopjes studded here and there; the long line of Boer prisoners in all kinds of mufti costumes, mostly in rags; their wretched horses—some wounded, some lame—and the women and children surrounded by a khaki cordon of troops, the only relief being the bayonets reflecting the rays of the sun. Albrecht was in a buggy drawn by two grey ponies, and General Woulmerans was on a white Arab pony. The former is a tall, handsome man, blue-eyed, and with a black beard. He was neatly dressed in riding-breeches. The latter is an old man with a white beard, long hooked nose, and a shabby mufti costume. We trudged along slowly, about two miles an hour. I had thrown out a scouting screen, and had remainder for support and escort combined. We marched till sunset (6.30), and then bivouacked at Klip Kraal. I had a waggon with me and ten mules, with two days' supplies.

Reveille was at 4.30 next morning, and we marched on again to Klip Drift, which we reached at 11.30. By the way, I had an especial duty—to look after Albrecht, his officers, and Woulmerans, and to shoot anybody who made an attempt to escape. All my men had charged magazines. At Klip Drift camp were several battalions of Guards, and the General (Pole-Carew) received us. He had a long chat with Albrecht, and I acted as interpreter. I then drew a full day's rations for my men, and we all had grub. The Boer prisoners were each allowed 1 lb. of tinned meat and two biscuits. Albrecht and Woulmerans lunched with the General. Berry and I were invited to the Guards' mess, but we declined, as we thought it best to look after the men and horses. We started at 3, and marched till sundown to within seven miles of Modder River Camp. The escort was composed of ourselves and the 2nd Grenadiers, under Colonel Eyre Crabbe. I know him, as I have acted as galloping officer to him at home.

Awfully decent fellow, and very good to me. Everybody in camp wondered very much at our coming up to the front so soon. I also saw Wilkinson, who was Adjutant of the school when I was up. In the evening I had a heavy night's work; had charge of all the Boer horses. I was up all night, but one poor animal died —bled to death. We started next morning (yesterday) at 4.30, and reached this camp at 9.30. We had a great reception. Handed over prisoners to General Officer Commanding. Lord Erroll and Colonel Crabbe thanked me for all work done, and said it was done well. Indeed, my men worked very well, and although it was a hard time, with hardly any sleep, they stuck to it manfully. Reported myself to General Officer Commanding here, and then joined Captain Waterlow. We remain here for two clear days to rest the horses and men. The horses are rather in a poor way through having had half-rations and bad water for so long, and most of us are a bit fine-drawn. However, the rest here is sure to do us good, as we get full rations, *bread* and fresh milk! Besides, we can buy luxuries if we want to. The weather is hot.

This has altogether been a big experience, and a great honour for the C.I.V. Lord Roberts has done everything for us; he took an enormous interest in us, and he got us up to the front. I have now been on almost every duty imaginable. We probably return to Stinkfontein Camp on Sunday, the 4th. Good news to-day: Ladysmith is relieved, and General French has got Botha and his 5,000 men in a trap.

My groom (Roberts, 3rd Middlesex Artillery) has gone into hospital to-day with fever. I am getting quite accustomed to the smell of dead horses and cattle. Got some of my kit back from Enslin.

Osfontein Camp, March 6, 1900.

My last letter to you was from Modder River. We stayed there for forty-eight hours, rested ourselves and

our horses, and fed up. I got some of my kit up from Enslin, but found a good deal had disappeared. What I miss most are my waterproofs and boots. However, I got a few things in the stores at Modder. I saw the battlefields of Modder and Magersfontein. The line of kopjes at the latter place was most imposing; they contain four tiers of fire, and the position looks impregnable. Modder is a large camp, with one or two stores and a hotel.

I don't know whether I have already written you that the night before we rejoined our regiment (March 4) I and my section were detailed to look after our bullock-waggon, which was painfully slow—one and a half miles per hour. Well, to start with, the waggon got stuck, so I had perforce to turn out all sick men and to make them foot it, and also had to unload. After an hour's work we were able to proceed, and I halted at an evacuated farm and bivouacked for the night. It was pitch-dark; the farm had been bombarded, and was roofless. At 10 o'clock a terrific storm burst over the veldt; first of all a hot hurricane, then ceaseless lightning and thunder, and the biggest downpour I have ever seen. We all got wet through; the whole place for miles was a lake a foot deep, and all our fires were out, the only grub biscuits. The rain stopped at 4, and at 5 the sky cleared and the sun rose. At 6 we made fires and had coffee, tinned meat, and biscuits. At 7 we marched off. Our regiment had shifted on to Osfontein (five miles east of Paardeberg). We rejoined them at 3 o'clock, all fit and well.

March 5.—Comfortable quarters in a house for the officers, and the men are comfortable under cover of a high kopje. Still with 8th Mounted Infantry Brigade, under Colonel Le Gallais. All are fit and well.

March 6.—Went to graze the horses in the morning, also in the evening. I and my section went on picket. Boers in close proximity. Naval Brigade arrived, and hauled their guns up the kopje. Guns fired at about

3,500 yards from high ridge. I had orders to go on scouting—straight line in line of general direction.

March 7.—Reveille at 4.30. Marched off with New South Wales Lancers, Kitchener's Horse, and Nesbitt's Horse at 9.30. Escort to Brigade Division of Artillery (twenty-four guns). Trotted most of the way. Hard scouting. Plenty of sniping going on. We became, ultimately, the advanced scouts, two miles ahead. We found enemy near Poplar Grove; were shelled hard by battery posted on high kopje. One shell burst within 100 yards of myself and Captain Bell, but did no damage to us, though some horses were hit. Our batteries did not reply, but pushed on according to orders, as the main division had got a commando penned up further on. The guns, however, came into action at Poplar's Grove, and did great damage. Lord Roberts' idea was to halt at Poplar Grove and get the whole army encamped there *en route* for Bloemfontein. The result was accomplished.

March 8.—Changed camp to the other side. There is more vegetation, owing, perhaps, to recent rains. Grazed horses morning and afternoon. Better grub. No transport. I hear that another convoy—130 waggons—has been captured by the Boers. Major Brazier Cray, 9th Bengal Lancers, our Brigade Major, messes with us; nice man. Fine weather, but cold nights, particularly towards early morning.

March 9.—Took horses grazing, and tested rifles. By the way, I see from the newspapers that our rifles are considered defective. They are all right, only sighted a bit too much to the right, 3 feet in 1,000 yards, and we allow for that. My rifle is a good one, as I knocked over a vulture at Paardeberg at 250 yards first shot. Have kept a feather as a trophy. No fresh news, except that we have received marching orders *en route* for Bloemfontein.

March 10.—Started as baggage-guard to our Brigade Baggage Column, practically a rear-guard, while army on the move in three parallel columns two miles apart

from one another—about 30,000 men. The most marvellous thing is the enormous transport, mule and oxen; it is endless, and all driven by natives. To-day is hot. This is a flat country. We halted at 12 noon, and had German sausage and biscuits (excellent, and very welcome). We marched off again at 3. A superb sunset. The sky effects in this country are really beautiful. Reached Desfontein Camp at 7, and halted for the night (fourteen miles' march). I went with my section on picket on a high kopje overlooking miles of country in the direction of the Boer retreat. It was fine weather—a moonlight night. We hear that a rear-guard action has been fought here by first column, and that the Essex Battalion lost 2 officers and 150 men killed and wounded.

March 11.—Rejoined regiment at 5.15. Started at 7, and trotted for five miles to rejoin firing-line with the Mounted Infantry Brigade. G. Battery R.H.A. here; passed them on the way. We joined firing-line at 12.30. Fifteen minutes for lunch—German sausage and biscuits. Blazing hot. All marched on. No enemy! We reached our destination at 3 p.m., and the whole regiment went on picket. No grub, but we got seven sheep, killed two and kept remainder. We had to supply pickets on outlying kopjes miles off. An uneventful night—no enemy!

March 12.—Next morning we cooked liver and kidneys—very good. We changed camp to Aasvogel Kop, a huge farm with a lake and large herds of cattle. All are camping here except Cavalry Division, which has moved on. Our transport rejoined us. A good breakfast for both officers and men. At 4 p.m. we started off for night march as advance-guard to column. A fine night. Halted at 8 for three hours. The Guards Brigade passed us here, doing a record march. We reached our camp at 3 a.m. (sixteen miles) —Vennerkley. I had three hours' sleep till 6.

March 13.—Rested here all day, and fell in again at

3 p.m. The C.I.V. were left flank guard to column, and I commanded. Have thrown out scouts. Owing to mules and oxen being done, we did not march off till 9 p.m. Awfully tiring; thunderstorms, heavy rains, and pitch-dark. In order to keep our saddles dry we had to keep mounted the whole time We marched all night. It was so dark that, owing to having to reconnoitre kopjes miles to our left, I missed our main body. However, I went on reconnoitring with my men, and ultimately fell in with the head of the column. We reached camp first at 5.30 a.m., wet and dead-beat. We simply tied our horses up, and fell to sleep as we were, on the wet ground. Others arrived at 6.30. This camp is called Brandam Kop, and is three and a half miles away from Bloemfontein. Bloemfontein was evacuated by Steyn on Monday night, and on Tuesday morning French entered with the Cavalry Brigade. Only a few shells were put in.

March 14.—Our camp is in a magnificent country—an enormous plain studded with kopjes, green grass, and just behind our camp rising ground covered with shrubs.

I have finished this letter here in Bloemfontein, or near it. We have had a good rest in camp here, both for men and horses. I believe we shall be here for another fourteen days. Troops are all round here—50,000 men. Lord Roberts is in Bloemfontein.

I have been twice to Bloemfontein. It is only a small capital, with some 8,000 inhabitants. There is a club there, with a large bar, open only to officers. But it is an interesting place; you meet everybody there, pretty well, in the service, besides newspaper correspondents. I have bought a few useful articles. Everything now, however, is about cleared out. The train service is clear. A big Union Jack floats over the Government House. By the way, I have seen my old Adjutant, Captain Wray. I heard from Colonel Cholmondeley that he was with the First Cavalry Brigade, so I rode over and saw him. He looks wonderfully fit and well; he is Adjutant to the

1st Brigade Division R.H.A. He has his majority. I had a long chat with him, and asked him to lunch with us next day to see the H.A.C. men. He came, and all were very glad to see him. He has seen plenty of fighting, being with the First Cavalry Brigade. By the way, the Bloemfontein shopkeepers are making a fortune.

What a splendid speech Chamberlain made! I heard to-day that Lord Salisbury has declared formally that he will never give up Egypt, also that Kruger is making for peace, also that Buller has captured Van Reenan's Pass. Things are beginning to look up a bit all round. I don't think the Transvaalers, however, will give in without a good stiff fight for it.

I have been to Bloemfontein several times now. It is a wonderful sight, with the troops from all parts of the Empire, war correspondents in rickshaws and buggies, and foreign military attachés in khaki and silver lace; they are all here. General Gourko, the Russian military attaché on the Boer side, was captured at Poplar Grove. Of course, he is released. Every evening there is a big tattoo in the market-place. All the buglers of a battalion sound the 'retreat' and march up and down. One evening I saw a most impressive sight. I had just had some tea with one of the officers in the club, and was coming out in the market-place, which was full of officers' horses, held by black boys, with buggies, soldiers, and Bloemfonteiners. Right on the far side were drawn up all the pipers of the Highland Brigade—about 100—and at 6 o'clock the pipers started playing their pipes and marching up and down. On the right a company of infantry with fixed bayonets was bringing in forty Boer prisoners, and on the whole scene the setting sun cast a red, lurid glare. It was a wonderful living picture. The shops in Bloemfontein are very good and scrupulously neat; in fact, the whole place is remarkably clean.

We are still with Le Gallais' Brigade, stationed out here three and a half miles south-west of Bloemfontein. The brigade is composed of six regiments: Kitchener's

Horse, Nesbitt's Horse, Australian Horse, New South Wales Mounted Infantry, 6th and 7th Mounted Infantry (regulars).

(From March 29, 1900, to April 6, 1900, there is no record, as the steamer with the mails on board had foundered.)

Camp eighteen miles from Bloemfontein and ten miles from Glen Railway Station.

On April 6 I found the regiment was ten miles from Glen Station, and took the train at 4.30 p.m. As I was waiting, Lumsden's Horse arrived from India—a fine lot of men, and good horses (Pegu ponies). I arrived at Glen at 5 o'clock, and the Grenadier Guards here put me up for the night. They are nice, jolly fellows. They left early next morning, and I joined Le Gallais' convoy. We reached the supply park, six miles from our camp, and at 2 p.m. our waggon came in for supplies. I joined them, and reached our camp at 5 p.m. At dawn the next morning I went out with a strong patrol, and saw the enemy far off. Returned to camp at 6.15. Alarms and excursions all day long; we are always under arms, and waggons packed. We really form part of a large outpost line round Bloemfontein.

Saturday, April 7.—Shifted camp further back (two miles). The Boers are now on our left. No excitement up to date. To-night, I have heard, we are to be attacked; we all slept with rifles, and did not undress. At 2 a.m. we saddled up all the horses, but nothing occurred.

Sunday, April 8.—All quiet. Had church parade. The weather is beautiful; there are cold nights, but hot days, with clear sunshine. The climate is perfect; we are 6,000 feet above the sea. The scenery is beautiful—big ranges of hills, and in the far distance are the mountains of Basutoland. I expect to be in the neighbourhood of Bloemfontein for another four to five weeks. There is a good deal of fever about

(there always is in the autumn here). All sorts of rumours about Buller's corps are flying about; it is said he is coming round the other side of Kroonstad. There appear to be large commandoes of Boers coming up from Norval's Pont. We also have Rundle's Division coming up here. It is difficult to say how long it will take before the war is over. There is little doubt but that the Boers will fight right up to and beyond Pretoria, and the country is so difficult that there will be a guerilla war for a long time. You will know far more about the general state of things than we do up here.

Monday, April 9.—Nothing fresh; all is quiet. I hear that all the last mails went down in the Union liner outside Cape Town. I also heard that the Highlanders have recaptured the waterworks outside Bloemfontein. Our force is to be reorganized, and we go under a new Brigadier—probably Hutton. They say that the Marquis de Villebois is shot, and that fifty Boer prisoners have been taken by Methuen. All is quiet in camp. The usual duties. Last night the men gave a very good smoking concert in camp round a bonfire. The Boers are quiet, and seem entrenching.

Tuesday, April 10.—All quiet; beautiful weather. In the afternoon I took out a strong reconnoitring patrol, and went within four miles of the Boer laager at Brandfort, a town of 2,000 inhabitants. Reconnoitred right round our position, and found outposts of Boers at farms, kopjes, and Kaffir kraals. Visited all our outlying posts. We did not once draw the Boers' fire though, for I had strict orders not to get entangled from the commanding officer. Was out five hours, and returned at dusk

Wednesday, April 11.—Last night was my turn for outpost duty. I took out support and picket, and took up position on high ground east-north-east of camp. It was a cold, quiet night. Three shots were fired by Australian picket at 8.30; we discovered it was one

of their sentries blazing away at a stray horse. At 10 heard another shot on our left, and found it was an Australian patrol fired upon by one of their own men. One of the patrol was hit in the leg. Remainder of night quiet. In the afternoon I rode over to the field hospital (Fourteenth Brigade, Maxwell's) to see our sick men. It is about eight miles from here, over beautiful country. All the sick men are going on well. One of my section—South, 2nd Middlesex Artillery—is down with enteric. I saw him; he is getting on as well as can be expected. Rode back, and reached camp in time for mess. During the night we had heavy thunderstorms and rain. Last night I heard that Brailey (one of our officers, No. 3 Section, No. 1 Company) is down with enteric at Bloemfontein. Lots of fever about just now, and Bloemfontein is evidently a hotbed of it.

Thursday, April 12.—Beautiful day to-day; all quiet. We now belong to the 6th Corps Mounted Infantry, under Colonel Legge. I am probably going out to make a sketch of our front, if it keeps fine, for the Colonel. To-day is mail day, and as I have a lot to do I will close this letter now.

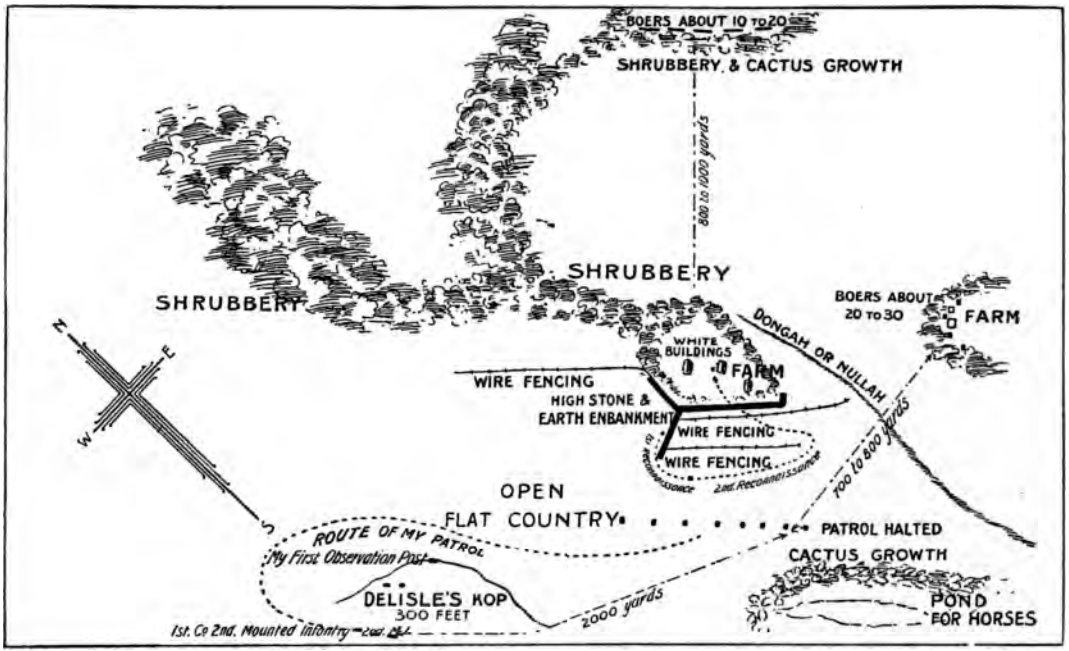
Karee Kloof, April 19.

I wrote you last on April 12. Since then we have had a quiet, uneventful time here. The Boer laager is where it was before, and, with the exception of a bit of sniping on both sides between patrols, nothing exciting has occurred.

On April 13 I did an eye-sketch of our front for the Colonel.

The weather has turned bitterly cold, with rain every day. We have seldom seen the sun during the past week; in fact, the weather has been just like an English March, but rather colder. To-day, however, it has cleared up a bit.

On Easter Sunday we had Divine Service, read by



SKETCH OF OBSERVATION-POST AND PATROL DUTIES APRIL 12, 1900.

the Colonel, and an Easter hymn. It was very simple, but impressive.

Easter Monday we had some sports, and very good they were, too.

I am very glad to say that Corporal Cooper and his subsection won the alarm competition, which I think was the chief event of the day. The competitors rested on the ground, dressed, wearing cloak, waterproof sheet under and blanket over them; the horse was to be picketed, nosebag on, saddle on the ground behind the man. As soon as a whistle sounded, competitors were to rise, saddle their horses, roll and put on cloak, blanket, and waterproof sheet on saddle, mount, and gallop off to a fixed point. Well, Corporal Cooper, as I said before, won this with his subsection against the whole regiment. It was a very good performance, and won entirely by Cooper's hard work. He is invaluable to me, and does a lot of work in the section.

General Wavell came to the sports, as well as several other officers. The whole affair was a great success. The officers subscribed £16 for prizes in kind, such as tobacco, butter, jam, etc., which were purchased in Bloemfontein.

On Tuesday there was the ordinary routine: patrols, pickets, and usual camp duties. I went on picket Sunday night and Tuesday night; soaking rain both nights! all in the day's work, however. No enemy seen either night.

We can see the Boer patrols all day long from our observation posts, three-quarters of a mile off. This afternoon I am taking out a strong patrol. For several evenings there has been a lunar rainbow. I have never seen one before; it is quite white, with the faintest of colours. I don't mean a ring round the moon, but a real, genuine rainbow. The horses are beginning to suffer from cold and wet; five died during the last two days. We are to be divided again: No. 1 Company (mine, Reid) to go to Seventh Division (General Tucker), No. 2 Company (Waterlow) to go to Headquarter Staff

Corps. This is a great pity, as it splits us up. The Mounted Infantry of the C.I.V. have never been all together since we have been out here. Captain Reid, with fifty men, is due here to-day or to-morrow. He has fourteen of my men; I shall be glad to see them again. They have been away for over four weeks. The H.A.C. men coming with him are Corfield, Greenwell, Toynbee; also Humphreys (rejoining fit and well again) and Byron (from hospital, Modder). Corporal Murnane has had a relapse, I hear, and has been sent back to hospital at Naauwpoort. Nesham is also rejoining, fit and well, and is coming up with Captain Reid. You remember he was wounded at Jacobsdal. The information I received that he was invalided home was incorrect.

Karee Kloof, April 20, 1900.

I wrote you yesterday, April 19, and closed my letter at 12 o'clock. In the afternoon I took out a reconnoitring patrol all round our front. It was very exciting, and my only regret was that I had ten men from No. 3 Section (London Rifle Brigade and London Scottish) instead of my own men. Well, we started at 2.15. At 2.30 o'clock I arrived at De Lisle's Kop, one of the extreme advanced posts held by a company of 2nd Mounted Infantry. I dismounted here, and had, as usual, a good look round the country. All clear of Boers apparently. One gets a magnificent view from there right across to Brandfort, where the chief Boer laager is. About 4,000 yards to the right front is a large white farm. Parties of Boers go here at various times for provisions, yet this farm flies the white flag, and, what is more, signals the Boers every night as soon as our pickets are posted. I have had a grudge against the place for these reasons, but have never been able to go there, as I have had strict orders not to do so. To-day the Colonel gave me a free hand by asking me to find out as much as I could about the

enemy's movements, especially as they had been reported very active fetching in cattle. This suited my book to a T. Well, as I have already written, I arrived at De Lisle's Kop, took observations, and got information that from eight to ten mounted Boers had been in the farm, but had gone away again. I proceeded, got my men in wide extended order, and halted them 1,500 yards from the farm. As I thought there might be a row if I took them any further and anything happened to them, I went on alone, very cautiously, and had a good look round. I got close up to the farm and saw two women, four children and some niggers. For safety's sake I had another good look and then galloped in. Said 'Good-day' and saluted one of the women, who was evidently the housewife. She seemed very friendly, and looked honest. I bought six chickens, two ducks, a sackful of dried peaches, and two dozen eggs for twenty shillings, then went back and called up one of my men, returned and loaded everything in two sacks. I was just taking a look round and bargaining for a pig when we were fired at from a clump of shrubs 600 yards north-east of farm. Bundled up sacks, picked up rifles, paid old woman, who was awfully excited, and galloped off. Bullets came round us like steam, but none of them hit. Reached remaining nine men, ordered them to dismount, to lie down, and await events. We were then about 2,500 yards off—well out of range. Another party of about ten to fourteen Boers started firing on our right flank, so I gave orders to mount, as I thought discretion the better part of valour, and we galloped off. It was all well worth the risk, for I got information about the farm and how it was built, and all its approaches, etc. I went round other observation posts, gathered information, and returned to camp at 6. Would have waited and had a shot at those Boers, but we were only eleven rifles against at least thirty, and besides, we were right in the open, and the Boers were sheltered by shrubs. I was only sorry I left the eggs behind;

hadn't time to pack them—such infernally breakable articles, besides being very messy. By the way, I killed a fine snake on the return to camp—4 feet long, and flat-headed. I have since discovered it to be a puff adder and poisonous, but a beauty. Have got him skinned, and am bringing skin home. I could shoot plenty of buck, but it is not allowed, as it arouses the whole camp. Strict orders against it from headquarters.

Friday, April 20.—Had quiet night. Cold and very heavy dew. I am orderly officer to-day; have to remain in camp and do all the camp duties—burying the dead horses, taking the horses to water, visiting the sick, prisoners, cooks, etc. In the evening I went on picket. It was a cold, fine, clear night; all quiet, except for endless visits of patrols from other regiments. At dawn (5.45) went forward to see if the enemy is active. There were only distant patrols of Boers. Returned to camp at 7 to breakfast. It was a lovely morning—clear, bright as crystal, and a magnificent sunrise. The whole veldt was covered with a white dew, and the tips of the distant hills were a rosy red. The life is unbeatable, and I am enjoying every moment of it. One lives day and night in the open fresh air, perhaps the freshest and best one can get in the world. One sees Nature in her best and truest colours, and the more one sees of her the more one loves her. The brooks and gullies are full of water, after the recent heavy rains, and the wide veldt has changed its old coat of a drab brown to a new one of fresh green.

Saturday, April 21.—To-day is a fine, hot day. All quiet.

Sunday, April 22.—A beautiful hot day, after a cold night. This morning, at 8.30, No. 2 Company moved off for Bloemfontein, to take up their duties as corps-troops to Headquarter Staff. The Colonel, Adjutant, Second Master, Captain Ryan (doctor), and vet. (Mulvey) have gone back to join staff. We (No. 1 Company) form part of divisional troops on Seventh Division (General Tucker).

We consist now of: Captain Reid; No. 1 Section,

Lieutenant Moeller; No. 2 Section, Lieutenant Berry; No. 3 Section, Sergeant Vine; No. 4 Section, Lieutenant Wilson—about 120 officers and men, Colour-Sergeant Smith; two machine guns, Lieutenant Wellby.

We also shall probably remain here for the present —*i.e.*, Karee Kloof—twenty-three miles north-east of Bloemfontein and eleven miles due south of Brandfort (Boer laager).

Everything seems quiet, except that the Boers made a big reconnaissance yesterday within five miles of our camp, 500 strong. However, they retired almost at once. To-day there is heavy gun-firing out west. There has evidently been some heavy fighting lately twenty miles off, but we have no particulars here at all.

In the evening went out on picket. A fine, cold night. All was quiet till 3 a.m., when I heard distant sounds of artillery moving on my right flank. I was just on the point of going out with a reconnoitring patrol when the patrol of the 2nd Mounted Infantry came up and informed me that the Tasmanian Mounted Infantry, New South Wales Mounted Rifles, two guns (15-pounders), were moving out as a strong reconnaissance force, with two pom-poms and a battalion of infantry.

At dawn (5.30) rode ahead on a distant kopje, and saw the force deployed. There was heavy gun-firing, but I could see no trace of any Boers, except a few widely-dispersed patrols. I waited till 6.45 before bringing in picket, but nothing further occurred. It was, seemingly, a reconnaissance in force, to impress the Boers at this particular spot, due east of our position and due north of Bloemfontein, possibly part of a big scheme; but one knows so little of what is going on outside that one can only write and state what goes on in one's own little corner.

Monday, April 23.—To-day I am orderly officer.

At 2.30 an order came in from brigade headquarters to send out a machine-gun and section to drive out fifty or sixty Boers on a kopje east-south-east of our position

and due south of Signal Hill. I immediately got my men ready, and started off with Wellby in command of his gun, located position, and sent out scouts. They had been sniping furthest Australian observation post.

I waited for an hour, then reported to Commanding Officer. The Australians came home again. No sport to-day; otherwise all quiet.

The following two days all seemed quiet, except for distant rifle shots fired in the north-east.

Karee Kloof, April 27.

I sent my last letter off yesterday at 12 noon. In the afternoon I went off on patrol. All was quiet. I did not go over to the farm, as fourteen Boers were supposed to be there; however, I reconnoitred all round it. The usual Boer patrols seen in the far distance. I arrived back at the camp at 5 o'clock.

Sunday, April 29.—All is still quiet. No parades to-day, except watering and feeding horses, cleaning kits and rifles, etc. In the afternoon I went out on patrol. Some way out spotted a large flock of sheep, and with great difficulty rounded them in towards camp. I was met by a Colonel and his staff, who informed me that they belonged to a friendly farmer called Maree. So there was nothing else to be done but to drive them in with the Kaffir in charge. It was hard lines, as I got them within 4,000 yards of enemy's outposts, and it would have been a fine haul. However, I determined to try my luck elsewhere, so I went over to a farm two miles east of our observation post, where Wellby raised chickens and ducks some days back. It is within two miles of the enemy's outposts. All was clear, so I went in, but only secured two chicks and shot a huge fat pig (half a boar, with tusks). Worse luck, I could not get it home, as, firstly, it was too heavy to draw, and none of the horses would stand still enough to take it strapped on; secondly, we were fired upon, miles off, it is true, but we were in a very

enclosed farm—by ridges, etc.—so we retired. In the evening went on picket. A bitterly cold, fine night. A slight ground frost in early morning. It is wonderful, the enormous change in temperature here between night and day. The days are blazing hot between ten and four, and the nights as cold as a December night in London.

Monday, April 30.—This morning, at dawn, a strong force moved out, composed of Lumsden's Horse, Loch's Horse, 4th Mounted Infantry and pom-poms, and a battery to north-east and east. There was some heavy firing, but, as I am orderly officer to-day, I was unable to leave camp. This force was supported on right rear in echelon by Fourteenth and Twenty-first Brigades of infantry with artillery. According to reports the reconnaissance was not quite successful, as about 2,000 Boers came out and cut off Lumsden's Horse, who lost touch. They lost five killed and seventeen wounded, amongst the killed being their Adjutant. At ten o'clock the firing ceased, and both sides withdrew. The Fourteenth and Twenty-first Brigades, however, came up further to our right and took up a permanent position to our right rear south-east. The Boers, apparently, had severe casualties.

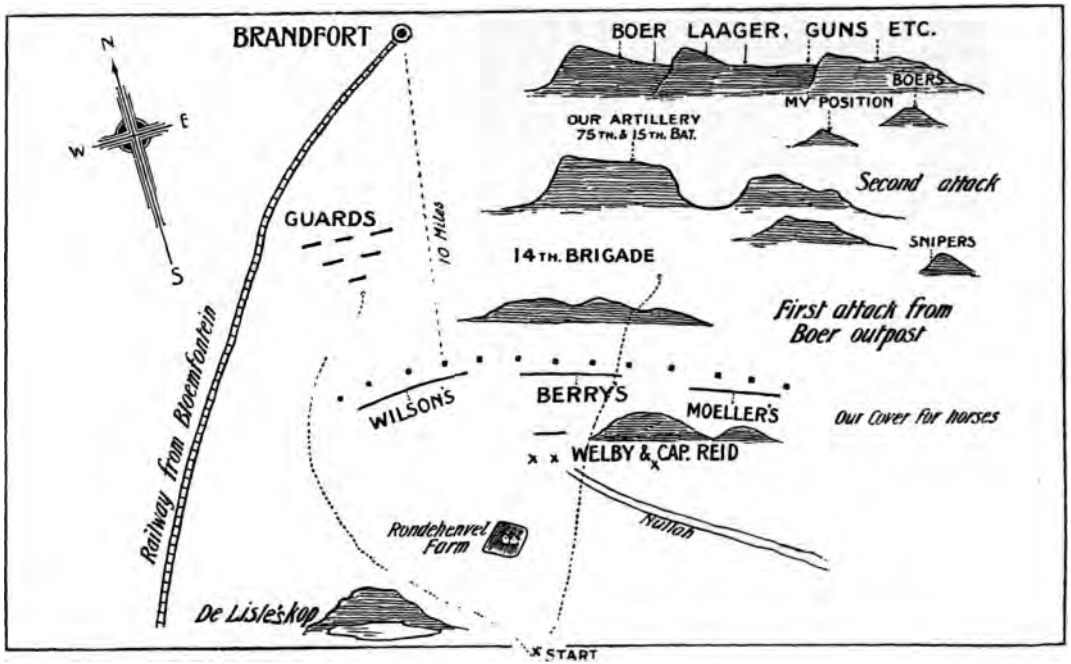
Zoorfontein, five miles west-south-west of Brandfort.

Tuesday, May 1.—All quiet during day. Evening went on picket. At 12 o'clock an orderly came up from camp. I was to return with my picket and support at first glimmer of dawn, as we were to move off. The night was all quiet. Returned to camp at 4.45, but found the advance delayed for twenty-four hours. A bitterly cold night.

Wednesday, May 2.—Got everything ready for departure, struck camp, etc. In the evening Wilson returned with sixty remounts, saddles, clothing, etc. Very lucky for us, he returned just in time. He also brought some sick men back recovered.

Thursday, May 3.—To-day has been a great day for No. 1 Company C.I.V. M.I., and No. 1 Section H.A.C. in particular.

Reveille was at 4.30. Saddled up at 5.30. Got into position at 6.30 as advanced guard and screen to Seventh Division, virtually in front of the forward movement and the whole British army. My section was advanced line of scouts. We started from De Lisle's Kop with Fourteenth Brigade (Wavell's and others behind us). Our direction was towards Brandfort, but north-north-west of it. At 6.45 I threw out my line of scouts and advanced. We went to the right of Roodeheuvel's farm (the one I visited and got fired on), and trotted towards the first kopje in the far distance. Berry and No. 2 Section were on my left, and Wilson on the far left rear. We covered a screen of about three miles. Captain Reid, Lieutenant Wellby, the machine-guns, and No. 3 Section, were in support. Between 1,500 and 2,000 yards from the kopje my section came under hot fire from Boers lying under cover of the stones; their fire was extremely accurate, even at this distance. I was right in the open, so I ordered my line to retire, and we galloped to the nearest cover, a mile away, where I closed, handed the horses to No. 3, and took out the remainder in skirmishing order. We advanced under fire, and at 1,500 yards I started 'independent,' with fairly good effect, as it stopped the enemy's fire. We advanced again and took kopje. The enemy retreated to a kopje further back, and mounted to a high ridge one mile back. We advanced again on foot, our horses following 1,000 yards in our rear, under Corporal Cooper (Cheshire Infantry) on our left. Berry's section was further left, and Wilson also still further left. We had no further opposition, and as the infantry were coming up I ordered our horses up, remounted, and threw out scouts again. Then we trotted out in the same direction, north-north-west, Berry and Wilson on left. With the exception of some small sniping parties of



SKETCH SHOWING THE ATTACK ON BRANDFORT.

Boers we had no further opposition. On approaching a high ridge of kopjes running east and west of Brandfort, and 7,000 yards from them, we encountered a heavy shrapnel artillery fire, and through glasses saw Boers right along whole succession of ridges, building entrenchments and stone sangars. Several shells burst near us, but luckily there were no casualties amongst my section. I retired at gallop to the nearest kopje, took cover, dismounted, and took up defensive position. At this point Wilson's section was also shelled and two men were killed—Sergeant Kingsford, London Rifle Brigade, and Private Holland, London Rifle Brigade. Private Holland I did not know, but Sergeant Kingsford was a spendid non-commissioned officer, a good soldier, and a first-rate good fellow, most popular with all ranks. He was struck by the fragment of a shell over the heart, obliquely, without even breaking the skin, but the shock finished him, as he died in half an hour. Private Murray (London Scottish) very pluckily stayed with him under fire till the end. The other poor fellow was killed instantaneously, riddled with shell. We had no other casualties, but several narrow escapes. Several bullets came precious close to me, and pinged the ground within 5 yards. At this juncture I was rather detached from the main body on the extreme right. On high ground 2,500 to 3,000 yards to the left rear of us, our artillery (75th Field Battery) came up and started work at once. A magnificent sight followed. The Boers' first shell at them burst our first gun, broke up limber, and killed two horses and one man. I saw all this through my telescope. Our first shell fell short, but the next was all right, and one Boer gun after another was silenced. The Boers occupied the whole line of kopjes (500 to 1,000 feet high), and there were 6,000 of them, with twelve guns and pom-poms and one 'Long Tom.' Far away to our right the Fifteenth and Twenty-first Brigades were in action as well, and were advancing. It was blazing hot weather. At

1.15 I got fired at by rifles from the kopje close in on our right, but we returned fire, and together with one shell from our guns the Boers shut up and evidently retired. At 1.30 got orders from Captain Reid to evacuate the kopje and retire on guns. I did so. Then came a lull for about one hour. I had a biscuit and a smoke, and there was a little rest for men and horses alike. The infantry were now advancing in large numbers to our extreme right and left. The Guards Brigade was on our extreme left. At 2 our company advanced again as a screen to division. There was no opposition at all bar sniping. I had orders to scout away to a great distance on our right, so got somewhat detached. However, all was clear. I returned again to our left front and scaled a high ridge occupied by Boers. No enemy! All gone, and the whole ridge, which was a magnificently defensive position, was occupied by our troops. The Guards Brigade marched into Brandfort. We retired to our camp (Divisional Headquarters) at dusk, horses and men done up. General Tucker was very pleased with us, and I think he might well be so, as we did all that was required, and found the enemy every time for the infantry. I never saw the men scout better. Every farm, ridge, and hollow was well scouted, and every ambush turned out. That we had no more casualties is really marvellous. My section worked admirably, and I was proud of them; they kept me well posted in everything. H.A.C., Queen's Westminsters, and 2nd Middlesex Artillery all did their best. Lobb, Nesham, and White (Queen's Westminsters) were particularly good, and Cooper and O'Connell invaluable.

Wilson and Berry occupied a farm to right front for the night. It was a fine day all round, the best I have had. The Boers evidently gave up this position in the face of a vastly superior force. They might, however, have held it much longer, as the ridge is an extremely strong position. They have retired—evidently towards Kroonstad.

The country is simply marvellous; from the top of the ridge you can see from twenty to fifty miles round, and far away south-west are distant mountains. The sunsets are glorious. It is a wonderful world, this!

Our transport arrived at 8, and we were all able to get supper. We have on us, each of us, two days' provisions and an emergency ration. The difference in temperature between 5 a.m. and 1 p.m. is 60°. I received orders at 11 p.m. that no move would be made in the morning, for which we are truly thankful, as the horses are done up; they must have done between thirty and forty miles yesterday in scouting.

Friday, May 4.—Slept soundly; a very cold night, but brilliantly fine. Reveille at 5.30; breakfast at 7. All quiet. Very hot. Hear De la Rey (Boer General) is badly wounded.

Lobb, Betteley and Nesham escorted some staff officers into Brandfort and returned this afternoon. This afternoon we recovered poor Sergeant Kingsford's body, and buried him. Nearly all the regiment turned out, and General Tucker and staff were present. The Brigade Chaplain read the burial service. It was awfully impressive, and we all felt losing a good comrade, a fine soldier, and a gentleman. It cast a gloom over all, and we were very sad.

We move off at 4.45 a.m. for six miles north of Brandfort, and we continue as screen to the Division.

You will be glad to hear General Tucker was very pleased with us and said we did our work well—in fact, he has mentioned us to Lord Roberts, and in despatches.

I am posting this letter in Brandfort, on the march, so I will close it.

Osfontein on March between Brandfort and Kroonstad, May 7, 1900.

I wrote you last on May 4, but could only get the letter posted to-day.

Saturday May 5.—Reveille 3.30. I received orders my section were to go as escort to detachment of Engineers at 5.45. a.m. The remainder of No. 1 Company went as advanced guard to General Wavell, Fourteenth Brigade. I had better explain to you the composition of our division:

General Tucker, Divisional Commander.

Fifteenth Brigade (General Wavell): Artillery, Field Batteries Nos. 62, 75, and 18; Mounted Infantry, No. 1 Company, C.I.V.; Infantry, four battalions—South Wales Borderers, Lincolns, East Lancashires, Cheshires.

Fourteenth Brigade (General Maxwell): Artillery, three Field Batteries; Mounted Infantry, two companies; Infantry, four battalions.

We are really acting as divisional cavalry, but have been attached temporarily to Fifteenth Brigade.

Well, at 5.45 I reported myself to Colonel Maxwell, commanding company R.E. (No. 26, I think). We left our camp (Zoorfontein) and proceeded east-north-east to extreme right flank. I scouted for them, my orders being to locate a hostile farm. After having gone about four miles, my scouts located the farm. We found it evacuated. Colonel Maxwell and I went over the farmhouse, and found it loopholed and barricaded for defence. So he blew the house up with gun-cotton, and cut the dam of a large pond close by. Fine sight seeing the house blow up.

At 9.30 returned to Brandfort to rejoin our division. Reached Brandfort, seven miles, at 12.30. Found the division gone, so halted, fed and watered horses, and lunched. Managed to get new bread and butter from a farm; very welcome. Started on our march, went twenty miles, then picked up the division just as they were halting on a plain close to Vet River Drift. Both men and horses were rather tired. I rejoined my company at 7.30, and the carts came up at 9.30 with our grub. The men are all well, except Sergeants O'Connell and Humphreys, who have a slight touch of fever. Our division just came up at the finish of the

fight; the Boers are fairly on the run now. Perhaps they will make a stand either at the Zand or Vaal River. Their strength is estimated at from 25,000 to 30,000 men, and 100 guns between here and Kroonstad.

Sunday, May 6.—Reveille 3.30. Moved off at 5.30 o'clock; dark. I furnished centre line of scouts, Wilson on left and Berry on right. Magnificent country, green veldt. The whole army seems on the move. Our left flank was the Brandfort-Kroonstad Railway. On the other side was Lord Roberts with Headquarters Staff. On the right flank were the Eleventh Division. Wonderful weather now, clear as crystal; cold nights, and blazing hot days. There are more farms and more vegetation, and there is better water.

We took a wrong direction—someone's mistake—and went to wrong drift; did not find it till late (4.30). Maxwell's Brigade crossed at the first drift; our Brigade halted at the second, too late to cross. Then our carts were not up, so I and ten picked men went to a farm close by and killed twelve geese, two turkeys and chickens, and also took some butter and flour. Paid 25s. for the lot (cheap).

In an emergency it is really necessary to get what one can the best way one can. I make a point now of examining every farm. Should I find rifles and ammunition, I should naturally loot the place. Otherwise I invariably pay for everything I get. The carts did not come up till 10.30. Every man carries two days' rations in biscuits and groceries—eight biscuits, 1 oz. of tea, and 1 oz. of coffee per man. It is not much, but sufficient, especially if one has any luck at farms. No enemy to-day; all have apparently retired.

Monday, May 7.—Reveille at 5.30. Marched off about 9 o'clock. I was left flank guard, Berry right flank, and Wilson advanced guard. O'Connell and Humphreys were too ill to ride, and had to go in a cart. Very sorry for them! Weather is grand; country, fine green veldt, interspersed with high kopjes and ridges. Our march was uneventful. We passed

close to Headquarters Staff, and Eleventh Division on our left flank. Rejoined Maxwell's Brigade at 12.30 in a shallow valley. We encamped on a large green plain at 5. A beautiful sight in the evening: moonlight, stars, open veldt, and the hundreds of camp fires. Next morning the carts were up early. Grub, ox and biscuits, and boiled green mealies with butter and salt; the latter very good. Our camp is Osfontein, close to Winburg-Brandfort Railway. We have good water.

Tuesday, May 8.—Stayed here for the day to wait for convoys to come up; a welcome rest. It is fine, brilliant weather; the men are all very fit. Our remounts are mostly Argentines—cobby horses, fit, but mulishly stupid. Perhaps they will improve in time. We shall probably march at 4 in the morning as escort to batteries. We are going for a five days' march, taking five days' provisions and fodder.

Wednesday, May 9.—Kroonstad. Started at 5.45 a.m. as escort to Divisional Artillery. A quiet march; saw no enemy. Went sixteen miles. Reached camp at 4.30 p.m., just three miles south of *Z*and River. Beautiful weather; all fit and well.

Thursday, May 10.—Reveille 4 a.m. Started at 5.30. I and my section were centre advanced-guard to the division. I may as well say that the section covers a front of 2,800 yards to two and a half miles. Berry was in support with his section. At 6 o'clock the enemy started firing from a ridge of kopjes and high ground north of *Z*and River. We pressed on, and got in touch with Hamilton's Brigade on our right (Twenty-first Brigade, which contains C.I.V. battalion). My scouts then crossed the *Z*and River. It was very difficult; there were steep banks, ravines, and quicksand. One or two men lost their horses. Heavy artillery firing on our left front; shells bursting all round us! Our division wheeled to the left, and Divisional Artillery (18th, 62nd, and 75th) got into action on a farm just across drift of *Z*and River, and put in capital work. Close by me occurred a casualty: a shell killed a man,

knocking him off his horse. My work was done, so I watched infantry advancing under a heavy shell-fire—East Lancashires in extended order, supported by South Wales Borderers. At this point I got an order from the General's staff to gallop off with six men to extreme left, and watch left flank. Did so. I got right ahead of firing-line. The fire was opened by the Boers on the extreme left of the kopje, shells bursting in the donga containing East Lancashires behind us. I sent an orderly back to General Tucker. The artillery opened fire on this kopje, and silenced them in no time. The battle was raging all along the line. Hamilton's Brigade came into action on extreme right flank, five miles off, and I believe the C.I.V. battalion were in this also.

At about 11.30 firing ceased. At 12 o'clock the infantry took possession of the line of ridges. I went forward again, and saw the Boers retiring at a gallop in the north-east direction. The Headquarters Staff and the Eleventh Division were then coming up on our left rear, south-west of us, marching due north to north-east. I halted and took up observation post.

Wilson and Wellby, with their rations, came up, as well as Nesbitt's Horse. It was a decisive victory for us, the Boers being routed all along the line. We had no casualties, but I have several men missing, amongst them being Toynbee, H.A.C., my orderly. His horse sank in the mud, but I stayed with him till he got it out, and saw him safe and all right, then I left him with one of our fellows to help him.

Friday, May 11.—Reveille at 4. A cold night-frost; dark till 6 o'clock. Marched off again at 5.45. Acted to-day as support to Berry's left flank; guard to division. A quiet march through fine grazing country. There were plenty of farms. Headquarter Staff, Eleventh Division were on our left. Marched all day, and covered twenty-four miles (from *Z*and River to Venter's Road Siding Station.) The infantry marched splendidly, —this being their third day's hard work in succession.

They really are magnificent, keep splendid line, and don't straggle; they had hard marching, too, through mealie-fields, over kopjes, and through ravines. We came across an English farm, where we were kindly treated and given dinner. Would you send Mrs. Duprey, Eendorn, Venter's Road Station, near Kroonstad, some newspapers? This is the name of the lady who owns the farm, and she was good to my men as well, and gave them tea and bread-and-butter. She and her husband have been badly treated by the Boers, and I should like to repay a little the kindness she showed me. Heard from her that a large force of Boers had retreated early in the morning with about twenty-four guns. They are very sick of us, can't make out how our infantry march so far in so short a time. We reached camp near Venter's Road Station at 5.45. Men and horses fit and well; H.A.C. going strong.

Saturday, May 12.—Reveille at 4. Marched off at 5.45. To-day I was in front, and left flank advanced-guard to division, with Berry as support, Nesbitt's Horse being right, and the centre advanced-guards. A blazing hot day; a fine country; high kopjes. We expected to find the enemy as we were approaching Kroonstad, so overhauled kopjes, farms, and ravines; but no enemy appeared, and most of the farms are evacuated. Came into touch again with Headquarter Staff and Eleventh Division on our left, and reaching a high ridge of kopjes, saw Kroonstad lying beneath us. It is a small town, with one bridge well blown up, and one bridge left intact. At 2.30 p.m. Lord Roberts and Headquarter Staff entered Kroonstad. A magnificent sight from our kopje (about 800 feet high). Came across Major and Captain of the 17th Lancers, very nice fellows. They informed me that General French defeated the Boers yesterday, and had left this morning at 8 for Vaal River. Reached camp 6.30, close by. I had no instructions to come in earlier. An enormous quantity of troops here: Headquarter Staff with corps-troops, three Cavalry Brigades, Eleventh Division,

Seventh Division, Twenty-first Brigade, and others (40,000 men).

Sunday, May 13.—A bitterly cold night, with a white frost in early morning; stayed here for to-day, the rest most welcome. A blazing hot day; had a welcome bath in the river Valsch, close by us. We encamped with the Fifteenth Brigade; the Fourteenth is on our left. All the men are fit and well, in spite of their long march. We really have done a big march in nine days (from Karee Kloof, near Glen, to Kroonstad), 115 miles —an average of thirteen miles per day, with two days' halt—a fine performance for an Army Corps. The C.I.V. battalion are two miles from us; I have not been over to see them, as I am orderly officer to-day. I heard, however, they were in a fight at Zand River, as supports to the Suffolks, but had no casualties. We have had splendid weather all along—cold nights and blazing hot days.

Camp, two miles south of Kroonstad,
Tuesday, May 15, 1900.

Sunday, May 13, was a quiet day spent in camp, and a rest for men and horses. I was orderly officer. The battalion of the C.I.V. encamped about three miles west of us this side of Kroonstad. We are encamped close to the river Valsch. I had a most luxurious bath in it; the water was delightfully cool. It is a very picturesque river; its steep, rugged banks are studded with trees. By the way, I might tell you we have had every possible type of oats for the horses—fine English oats, American white clipped, a mixture of Russians and Americans, white clipped, also English and Americans; no mixed clipped or black oats. All the oats we have had have weighed a good 42 to 45 lbs. For a whole week at Karee Kloof we had heavy, sweet Turks, of all oats in the world!

Monday, May 14.—No move will be made at present, as we are waiting for convoys to come up with provisions and fodder, and secondly, till the railway is fairly intact. I went into Kroonstad to-day with

Wellby, and sent you a telegram, saying Dick and I were fit and well, and all safe after our recent experiences. I could not post letters, as the post-offices were closed, and the only way is through the divisional field post . Kroonstad is a town somewhat resembling Bloemfontein, not so large, naturally, and certainly not so well kept. One really noteworthy feature of the place is its approach from the southern side across the Valsch River. It is a very wide drift, cut out of stone, and a very fine piece of work. Most of the shops were closed, and those which were open were entirely cleared out. I returned to camp at 4.30, and had a welcome surprise. Taffy was in camp to see me; I was awfully glad to see him; he looks fit and well. He told me he had cabled Lord Denbigh about Murnane and O'Connell. I never cable about casualties, as they may be well in a week or so, and it only alarms their relations unnecessarily. I had a long chat with him. All his men seem fit except one or two. His column—*i.e.*, Twenty-first Brigade, with 9th Lancers—is a composite regiment. The Household Cavalry and Hussars, all under Smith-Dorrien, proceed early on Tuesday to Lindley, to try and collar Steyn.

Tuesday, May 15; *Wednesday*, 16; *Thursday*, 17.—All these were quiet days in camp. I spent nearly all my time foraging and collecting horses. Very good work, scouring farms! Am mess president *pro tem.*, getting first-rate grub—plenty of fresh butter, milk, eggs, poultry, bread, etc. The scale of prices which I pay is:

Sucking-pig	3s.
Geese and ducks ...	2s.
Fowls	1s.
Butter	1s. per lb.
Milk	6d. per quart.
Bread	1s. per loaf.
Eggs	20 for 1s.
Honey	1s. per bottle.

On Wednesday our broken-down officers' cart returned repaired. I am very glad to get it back, as it contained a lot of stores, Cobbell's cases, etc.

Horses I give receipts for, which Government pays for at the rate of from £1 to £5 each. It is magnificent weather; we have hot days, but clear, cold nights, with early morning frost. I sleep outside, having got accustomed to cold! All are fit and well, and getting fat on good country produce. The men are also doing very well, as they get plenty of poultry, etc.

To-day is Thursday, 17th. Colonel Cholmondeley and staff have come up, and proceed to Kroonstad; they are on Headquarter Staff.

Friday, May 18.—No move yet. Went out again for foraging to the same two farms, and several Kaffir kraals in the morning. I got eggs, honey, vegetables, potatoes, milk, and butter. Magnificent weather. In camp during the afternoon. Colonel Cholmondeley, Adjutant, and staff have gone twenty-five miles on with convoy. General Hamilton is at Heilbron. General French has returned—I believe under orders—back to Kroonstad.

Saturday, May 19.—Sent cart foraging to these farms again; went myself, as well, to make arrangements for next week. These two farms lie close together; one is owned by a Free-Stater called Botha (the son fought all through Ladysmith battles, but has given up his arms and returned to the farm), the other belongs to an Englishman called Penny.

Young Botha is a rather decent chap, and I had a long chat with him about the war. His views are somewhat singular. Penny is the real type of the colonial Englishman. It is not half bad work foraging, especially buying from the native kraals, for they sell things for next to nothing.

Camp, two miles off Kroonstad,
Sunday, May 20.

Am not posting my letter till to-day. We all went to divisional march parade; it was very impressive—about 5,000 troops in a big square, the officers in

front of their commands, General Tucker and staff in the north-east corner, and in the centre the divisional Chaplain, with all the regimental drums piled up in front of him. He is a young, handsome man about thirty-five. He gave us a simple, impressive service, and one could see it went home with the Tommies, as they were all attention, which is somewhat unusual on these occasions. The division probably marches to-morrow, the 21st, or Tuesday morning latest.

Nesbitt's Horse and Tucker's Scouts have been disbanded, as their time is up, so we shall have all the scouting to do for the division, which will mean pretty stiff work, as we are only 135 men all told in No. 1 Company.

As regards things out here, I anticipate the hardest fighting across the Vaal River. Scouting will be far more exciting, as the Transvaalers hate us bitterly; there will be some sort of resistance at every farm, and we shall have to be continually on the look-out for snipers. In fact, it will be a regular guerilla war. As far as I can make out, the man who has come out best in this campaign is Tommy Atkins, particularly as regards the artillery and colonial and volunteer mounted infantry. Some of the leaders have been thought at fault, and the cavalry at times next door to useless. One leader, who was singularly successful at first, has become very sticky lately, and is rather inclined to rest on his past laurels. He allowed 3,000 or 4,000 Boers to get clean away from him near Bloemfontein, at or close to the Waterworks; in fact, neither he nor his force ever located them, and then he made a blunder at the Zand River fight in allowing the thirty-six guns (Boer Artillery) to get away as they did. Considering what a splendidly mobile force he has, he has been very slow. I myself saw the Boers retiring at the Zand River from the extreme forward left flank. You will remember I went out with General's orders to go forward and watch extreme left flank, and was the first to locate a new

battery on the extreme left high kopje which threatened to enfilade advancing infantry (East Lancashires).

However, our side of the campaign has been beautifully handled. Meanwhile, as far as I can gather from gossip here, the tactics in other fields of operation were bad. Had it not been for the undaunted pluck and splendid solidity of the much-despised foot-soldier, 'Tommy,' Ladysmith would never have been relieved. In spite of contradictory orders, taking useless positions, and then abandoning them, fighting an invisible enemy hidden away amongst the kopjes, our Tommy was 'always there.' I have the most profound admiration for him; he is a wonderful chap! At the Zand River fight, when the Tommies of the East Lancashires were lying in the donga preparatory to the advance, with shells and bullets flying all round them, they were lying there, some smoking, some eating biscuits and a bit of jam, and some even playing a game of stones in a ring, all as unconcernedly as if they were taking part in manœuvres at Aldershot. I saw this myself, and wondered. Half an hour later they advanced, and drove the Boers out of a good stiff kopje with the point of the bayonet. Then his marching is wonderful, as you know; on several occasions during the heat of the day, and very cold nights, he has done his forty to forty-five miles in twenty-four hours. This is an opinion of mine—a subaltern in Mounted Infantry—not worth much! I don't think it is far wrong, but it does not do for me to air opinions, as you can well understand.

Pretoria Racecourse,
Friday, June 8.

At last I have an opportunity of writing to you! My last letter was, I think, written on May 20, from Kroonstad, the day before we left.

Monday, May 21.—I received orders early in the morning to march. Moved at 11.30, and only changed camp. Rode at the head of the division through

Kroonstad to a camp on the slope of a high ridge, about three miles north-east of Kroonstad. There was one rather amusing incident. We were moving parallel with our brigade division of artillery (62nd, 75th, and 18th) about one mile apart, before reaching Kroonstad; there was only one big drift to cross before getting into the town. Well, about two miles from the drift we started trotting to get to the drift first. I was ahead with my section. As soon as we started trotting the rest did the same, and the whole way to the drift it became a regular race. The last three hundred yards we were still abreast, and we both broke into a gallop. We just got in front by about ten to fifteen yards. It was rather fun, especially as they got the benefit of our dust. We had two cases of glanders amongst the horses yesterday; both cases were destroyed, and twelve horses which were picketed close to them were sent into quarantine at Kroonstad; horses and saddles were confiscated. I tried hard to get remounts, and Wellby managed to get ten good Basuto ponies from the remount depot. I was orderly officer, and took our horses to water. It really was a remarkable sight at the big drift at Kroonstad. We reached the drift at five o'clock, and pretty well all the horses and mules of three divisions were being watered at the same time. It made a fine living picture, with the crimson rays of the setting sun on the men, horses, rocks, and water.

Tuesday, May 22.—To-day we started on the great march. But, before going any further, I will explain to you again that Nesbitt's Horse and ourselves covered the left flank of the division, the right flank being covered by the Eleventh Division, whilst our front was covered by a brigade of Mounted Infantry —the 4th and 8th. By the way, General Wavell, who commands the Fifteenth Brigade of our division, was left behind at Kroonstad, ill. Well, we had reveille at 4.30, and started at 6, marching north-east. Berry's section was left flank, scouts and I were

in support of him, Wellby's section and Wilson's being the same for the rear part of the division. We had an uneventful march through a fine, open, grazing country, very similar to the Sussex Downs. We marched about seventeen miles, and reached camp at 3.30 p.m. We cover about double this distance, of course, as we have to scout two to three miles on the left flank. Our camp was called Honing's Spruit, and we camped beyond the spruit (small river). Tommy Wilson shot a fine buck, and we had fresh venison chops for dinner; very good they were, too! It is fine, hot weather, with cold, frosty nights.

Wednesday, May 23.—Reveille at 4; marched off in north-east direction at 6. We were all very grateful that our direction was always north to north-east, as we had the sun in our faces the whole day instead of at our backs. To-day I and my section were left flank front scouts, with Berry in support. We had a quiet march of thirteen miles through undulating, open, grazing country. There were plenty of farms, so we always could get abundant provisions in the way of eggs, poultry, and fresh butter, at pretty low prices. We camped at a place called Roodeval.

Thursday, May 24.—Reveille at 4; started at 6 a.m., north-east again. Marched as far as the Rhenoster River—about five miles. We were on the extreme left flank—quite four to five miles west of the division. The division crossed by the main drift, and we crossed by a horse and foot drift. The Rhenoster River is worthy of note, as it is not to be seen until you are almost on it. The banks on both sides are almost perpendicular, and drop between 60 and 80 feet. There is not much water, but what there is is beautifully clear, and icy cold. We could see our division far away on our right, and far away on the horizon we saw the balloon of the Headquarter Staff, with the Eleventh Division and Lord Roberts.

We received orders to wait until the division had crossed before proceeding further, and had to wait

four hours until it got across. Whilst we were halting Captain Reid and I went out buck-shooting, but we had no luck. There were several herds about, but they never let us get within 1,000 yards of them, as we were always to windward, the wind being south-west. The division halted two miles north of the drift, and we rejoined them and formed a camp at a place called Nooitgedacht. We reached camp about 6.30, and called at several very interesting farms.

Friday, May 25.—Reveille at 4; started at 6. The left flank are scouts to-day, with Berry in support. One day I do scouting and next day support, turn and turn about with Berry, whilst we take turn and turn about with Nesbitt's Horse for scouting on left front.

A long, dull, uneventful march. Very hot. Open country for miles and miles, slightly undulating, with good grazing. I forgot to mention before, that far away on the right flank was Ian Hamilton's division. Well, this division crossed Lord Roberts and Eleventh Division at 1.30, thus bringing Ian Hamilton on our right. We reached camp at Wittepoort at 2.30, after having done about fifteen miles. No wood anywhere for fires, only barbed-wire fences! This is a great characteristic of the country—the miles and miles of good barbed-wire fencing, which marks all farm boundaries.

Saturday, May 26.—Reveille at 4; started at 6—north-east, as usual. To-day we are extreme left flank scouts. Received orders to get information about the Vaal River (which was on our left flank) *re* drifts, water, and enemy. Very important this, and Captain Reid came with me and my scouts. Pushed on for some miles north-west of division. No enemy! Flat, undulating country, with a high ridge of kopjes north-west. At 12.30 we caught a first glimpse of the Vaal River and Transvaal beyond, a magnificent sight it was, too! Right below us was the Vaal Valley, and meandering in and out was a broad river, 200 to 250

yards wide, shimmering in the sun against a dark background. We found our Mounted Infantry Brigade already on the other side (4th and 8th). We heard from farms that the Boers had retired on the previous Wednesday. No opposition at all; and I don't wonder at it, as there was no defensive position for the Boers to take up, the country on the other side of the Vaal being as flat as a billiard-table. At 1.30 another noteworthy incident occurred: Ian Hamilton's Division, containing Twenty-First Brigade and C.I.V. battalion, crossed our front, so now our division was in the centre, with Ian Hamilton on our left, and Lord Roberts and the Eleventh Division on our right. I sent several messages in to Captain Reid, who sent the same on to the General, *re* drifts. We came across a river unmarked in any map, called Leeuwspruit, and followed it back for a mile or so. I made a sketch of it, and sent that in—in fact took it myself to Colonel Hegan, our D.A.A.G. Rejoined our division at 5.30 p.m., and camped just on this side of Vaal River at a place called Taibosch Spruit, a river which runs nearly parallel to Leeuwspruit, very narrow, but very deep. We had a mighty day to-day: the division did twenty-four miles, and we scouts did every bit of forty-five miles. Horses and men were thoroughly done up. My boys did thundering well to-day, and stuck to their work like Britons; it was a hard day, and we had really responsible work to do. Our work was not over, for, as already mentioned, the Taibosch Spruit was narrow and deep, and the drift was almost impassable for waggons. We waited till 9 p.m., hungry and tired, for our waggons; then the company, men and officers, went down to the drift, found our waggons, and helped them through. You have no idea what a scene that drift was in the dark! Waggon after waggon—and there are about five miles of them to a division—rushing down one bank of the drift and toiling up the other side, with their teams of sixteen or eighteen mules or oxen, with yelling Kaffirs armed with long

whips. There were several men hurt, and any amount of dead horses and mules. Perkins was run over; luckily for him, it was only in a very sandy part, and he got off with a graze. We got our waggons into camp at 11.30, and had our grub (very, very welcome!). Slept like tops.

Sunday, May 27.—Reveille at 5.30; marched off at 7. To-day we are supports to Berry on left flank. At 9 o'clock I and my section crossed the Vaal River, following Berry's section at a horse drift about two miles west of the main drift, where our division and Lord Roberts and Eleventh Division crossed. At last we were in the Transvaal! We all took off our hats and shouted and sang out of sheer joy. It was a lovely morning, too! The water was fine, clear, drinking water. Arrived at Vereiningenstadt, and there came across the first really cultivated farm I have yet seen, with orchards, vineyards, and orange-trees. Halted here, to wait for our division, for five hours. We got some good potatoes in a field, but no fruit, of course, as winter is on. At 3 we moved on and joined our division on a plain about three miles north of Vaal River and two miles west of Vereininung.

Monday, May 28.—Reveille at 4; marched at 6. I was extreme left flank scout, proceeding along a high ridge running parallel to division, and about five miles from them. This ridge was quite 1,500 feet high. In the valley were the two divisions marching side by side, and on the other side of the valley was another big ridge running parallel to the one I was on. The valley was quite ten miles wide, and ran in a north-east direction. You have no idea what a sight it was. Right below, in the valley, were the troops, and round the tips of the kopjes were layers of white mist tipped with red from the rising sun; the ground was covered with white frost. With the clear air, it reminded me strongly of winter in Russia. For the first time we came in contact with big veldt fires, and several times we had to dodge them and keep to leeward of them.

To-day, too, we heard heavy firing on our left and front; but I, personally, on the extreme left, saw no enemy at all. Evidently Ian Hamilton's column were in action. We halted and camped at the head of the valley at a place called Witkop, after having marched seventeen miles. Horses are getting done up. Did not get our waggons up till late; but luckily one of the sergeants managed to pick up a whole venison, and they gave us officers some, which kept us going. It was a curious sight, the fires of the two divisions (30,000 men) camped together, and all round us huge veldt fires still burning. It was a bitterly cold night, and my water was nearly frozen solid in the morning. Just think! we sleep on the veldt with quite 20° of frost at night, and move in the day with the thermometer over 90°—an enormous contrast! Were it not for the wonderful air, we should all, I think, be dead uns.

Tuesday, May 29.—Reveille at 4; marched off at 5.40, more dead than alive with cold. At 6 there was heavy firing on left again. We reached Klip River at 9 a.m., finding the railway bridge intact. There were huge ridges of kopjes due north. We heard from a Boer deserter that Kruger has left Pretoria, and is making Lydenburg his capital, also that he will continue the war in the bush country.

A very bad bridge was built by Engineers for the troops to cross; it was twice broken, and there was great delay—a halt, indeed, of four hours. Berry and Wellby sent out to watch left flank, and report on firing in that direction. They returned, but missed us somehow or other, and crossed drift at 12.30. We waited and waited until 3, and then Reid decided to go on. We marched and marched till 12.30 at night, walking dismounted nearly all the way. Most extraordinary! Owing to that delay the troops got mixed up, and there were any amount of bodies moving about in the dark, not knowing the way. Besides this, there were miles and miles of waggons and different columns of convoys wandering in different directions over the veldt. Then

there were big veldt fires all over the place, and we kept on mistaking these for Johannesburg or Elandsfontein, as we knew we were not far off either place. Well, we wandered along till 1.30 through disused mines and mine-shafts, and then decided to halt where our lost Engineers and ammunition column (Seventh Division) had bivouacked. We had hardly settled down before a Colonel of artillery came up to us and told us we had better shift, as a large commando of Boers were in the vicinity. Accordingly the whole lot of us turned out and rejoined the convoys, which were still wandering about. We marched till 3.30, and then I got definite information that the camp was within five miles of us. We were all so tired that convoys and all turned in, and outspanned there and then. Luckily I had some of our stores with me, and we made some coffee and had biscuits. The men had nothing except a biscuit apiece, which I and Reid gave them from a Huntley and Palmer's wheaten biscuit-box that we had brought with us. It was bitterly cold; but we were all so tired, I believe we could have slept in an ice-bath! We were close to the railway. It was a night that simply baffles description. The confusion was all owing to the delay over Klip River.

Wednesday, May 30.—Reveille at 6.30. A scratch breakfast, and we all marched off at 7. I got on ahead and found where the camp was. It was a beautiful fresh morning. At 8 we got sight of Johannesburg, with Rand and Simmer, and Jack and Guildenhuis mines. A wonderful sight! Johannesburg is a big city on a high ridge. As far as the eye can reach there are mines. At 8.30 we reached our camp (on Boksburg), and here we found an Army Corps of 30,000 starving, breakfastless men! All the lost convoys came in at 9 and 9.30, also all detached bodies. I found Wellby and Berry already in the camp with their sections. We had orders to saddle up at 10.30, but could not move till 1.30, and then moved to a high ridge west of

Johannesburg, close to Vogel's Deep Mines. It was very interesting going through the different mines one has heard so much about in London. I had a magnificent view from the other side of the ridge. Heavy firing was heard ten miles north-east. It is rumoured that French had a reverse yesterday. We camped here. Waggons late up. My men and horses dwindling every day—done up!

Thursday, May 31.—Reveille at 6. Orders to march at 9.30, and to occupy post in Johannesburg. Then order countermanded. Troops to march through Johannesburg, which surrendered this morning. We marched in, and watched Headquarters and Eleventh Division go past. Then we went in at head of Seventh Division. A most interesting march. The streets were deserted, except for quantities of Kaffirs, Zulus, Polish and German Jews, a very rag-tag-and-bob-tailed lot! Passed the iron factory, which Begbie blew up with dynamite—an extraordinary wreckage to be seen of houses all round. It is a fine city, all electric light and quantities of telegraph wires (a new American apparatus). In the town we marched past Lord Roberts and staff. At the other end we had a marvellous view, as the country to the north, north-west and north-east drops all round. Here was the fort commanding the country around. We had a long march after this, and reached our camp, Orange Grove, at 5.30 p.m. We have all been on half and quarter rations for some time, and it was the irony of fate for hungry troops to pass shops lined with appetizing stores! The waggons were very late again in coming up, the convoys getting mixed on the road; they ultimately reached us at 11 o'clock. Dined off trek-ox steak and one biscuit. Mighty fine! Heard this evening that Brice of the Queen's Westminsters in my section died this morning from enteric fever. He was buried where he died by Sergeant Loder and a burial party. Brice was very plucky, as he had not been well for some time; but he stuck to it, and only

went into hospital the day before yesterday. Everything possible was done for him, but he died, poor chap! in perfect peace.

Friday, June 1.—Reveille at 6. Got orders to saddle up and hold ourselves in readiness. We then got orders to join a force to round up some Boers south-west of Johannesburg. As our horses were very done up, Captain Reid only sent me and Wellby and thirty picked men and horses. We had orders to meet the combined force at Park Station, Johannesburg. Met a force consisting of Nesbitt's and Roberts' Horse, in all 250 mounted men, with Wellby's machine-gun, the whole being under the command of Major Mayne, K.O.S.B. All marched off at 12.30 to a dam near Mines, south-west of Johannesburg. In front of us was a ridge of kopjes overlooking cross-roads—Heidelburg, Johannesburg, and Kroonstad. At this point the convoys had been sniped the previous day. Major Mayne gave orders to round up this ridge, Roberts' Horse on left, C.I.V. in centre, and Nesbitt's Horse on right, all to start at 2.30. Proceeded, and my boys scouted extremely well over a difficult country. No enemy, however, either visible or audible. Reached the top of the ridge at 4.30.

Camped just under ridge. Wellby and I dined with Nesbitt's. Very good fellows! Nesbitt is a first-rate soldier, and pretty cool, too. A very cold night.

Saturday, June 2.—Reveille at 6. Our Scotch cart, with provisions, turned up with two days' full rations. Had breakfast. Major Mayne rode back to report to headquarters, and to ask for further orders. He returned at 11.30, with orders for all of us to rejoin our commands. Had lunch, saddled up, and left at 1.30 to rejoin. Went through Johannesburg, and halted there for one hour to allow the men to buy a few things. I saw Waterlow, also Concannon of No. 2 Company. Hear that a battalion of the C.I.V. were in action the other day and had twenty-two casualties, Captain Barkley hit in the mouth and neck. But they got into

the Boers with the bayonet! Very glad they got a show at last. All the ground for some way round is marked out in claims, white marble pillars marking each. Tried to wire you and Lord Denbigh, but the telegraph-office was closed, the post-office ditto. Well, we marched on about eight miles north-east of Johannesburg, but could not find our division as it was getting dark; so we picked out a nice spot and bivouacked for the night. I had a very jolly evening with Wellby. We dined off Maconochie, ration biscuits, jam, and chocolate. By the way, on our march back, as we passed Headquarters Staff at Orange Grove, Colonel Grierson came out and asked me how we had got on. I told him, and we had a chat. He seemed a very good sort, and is covered in ribbons! You know he was military attaché in Berlin.

Sunday, June 3.—We had our reveille at 5, and breakfast at 6. At 6.30 we noticed cavalry advancing towards us. They proved to be the Third Cavalry Brigade, and we heard from them that the whole army was on the march again for Pretoria. We followed after them, and struck our division and Captain Reid at 8.45. Proceeded east to north-east as left-flank guard to division, Ian Hamilton's Division being right away on our left, and Headquarters and Lord Roberts on our right. Nesbitt's Horse returned this morning to Johannesburg for police duty. After marching about twelve miles we crossed a small drift, and camped on a high ridge overlooking the country all round, called Leeuwkop. We ourselves occupied a high kopje, one and a half miles north-west of our division. Reached camp 1.20, and remained till next morning.

Monday, June 4.—Reveille at 5, and started north-east as left flank guard as usual. Had not proceeded far over Leeuwkop before we heard heavy artillery-firing due north, about eight miles off. We pushed on for some hours, and found a general action proceeding along the ridge of hills running east to west three miles south of

Pretoria, between the entrenched Boers and Broadwood's cavalry with horse artillery. The 4th and 8th Mounted Infantry were also engaged. Our infantry pushed on and occupied first line of hills opposite, the second line, which the Boers were holding, being about 3,000 yards distant. Our scouting work being over, we closed in, and halted under cover, waiting orders. I went up as far as the firing-line to have a look. It was a fine sight. Our infantry (South Wales Borderers, King's Own Scottish Borderers, and Lincolns) occupied the first ridge in extended order, with the batteries in action on right centre from commanding kopje. The Eleventh Division were apparently not in action at all. Their batteries and ambulance had, however, to retire, owing to being heavily shelled from one of the forts on the right. I saw all this. This fort was, however, silenced half an hour later by two 4·7 naval guns. Firing continued, and whilst the Seventh Division were holding the front Broadwood's cavalry and the advanced cavalry of Ian Hamilton's Division, which had just come up, worked round to the left of the Boer position, which was immensely strong. The ridge the Boers occupied was about 600 or 800 feet high, and extremely steep. Firing continued till 5, and then ceased. A general advance was ordered, and at 6 we occupied the Boer position outside Pretoria. We camped here for the night. It was very cold, and the waggons came up late. A curious characteristic of the country here is that all the grass is burnt up. It is apparently done purposely to show up the khaki of the British uniforms. We had only a few casualties. I saw two men hit whilst I was up in front. I must say that, considering the strong position the Boers held, they made a very poor show.

Tuesday, June 5.—Reveille at 5; started again at 6, and scouted amongst hills to the left of our division. Only desultory sniping. At 7 o'clock we were as far as the last ridge, and here I got the first sight of Pretoria lying below in the valley. It lies beautifully

surrounded by hills. To the left was the big leper hospital. A general halt was ordered here, as Lord Roberts was waiting for the formal surrender. It was a marvellous sight seeing column after column of troops emerging out of the hills. All three divisions are concentrated here. At 9.30 Pretoria had surrendered. The troops are in great spirits. I went into the town with my servant and a led horse to get some provisions, whilst we and the Brigade Division Artillery waited for orders. The Eleventh and Ian Hamilton's Division marched into Pretoria. Pretoria is a fine town—small, but containing some good buildings. Who do you think was the first man I met in Pretoria? Captain —— in a cab. He was very glad to see us again. He looked very fit, and has grown stouter, but is in Burk's Hospital with a bad leg. He asked me to come and see him there as soon as I could. I got a few provisions together for our mess, and returned, finding our company encamped on the now historical racecourse, where all our prisoners have been for so long. This is a big racecourse, enclosed by trees, iron fencing, and a wide barbed-wire entanglement.

Wednesday, June 6.—At last we have arrived at our destination, and I think for the present we shall stay here, as the batteries have gone into the barracks. I went into the town again to buy provisions for our mess. There are three good hotels and some fair shops. I went with Wilson into the Raadsaal, and it certainly is a fine place for this country, and for so small a town as Pretoria. Botha, I hear, is still at large, and there are several commandos of Boers and paid mercenaries knocking about the country. All the prisoners came in except 900. The officers are free. I don't think the end is far off now, but it is difficult to form an opinion, as one gets so little trustworthy information. I enclose a detailed list of my section, how many are with me, and where the others are.

Thursday, June 7.—Fallen again into usual camp routine; nothing interesting to write about. Went to

see a comrade, and he gave me a most interesting account of the affair at Sannah's Post, near Bloemfontein. His batteries were with Broadwood. As the Boers were too strong for them, they retired, and camped for the night 1,200 yards from a drift. This drift was supposed to be held by Mounted Infantry, and outposts were presumed to be posted all round. They started early next morning, with the ammunition column in front, crossing the drift. It was quite dark, and there seemed to be some delay in getting across, so the Colonel sent an officer down to shove them along. He went, but had hardly got to the drift when he was told he was a prisoner. The whole column had moved into a commando of Boers within 2,000 yards from where they slept. Well, all the prisoners were taken to Kroonstad on foot, and entrained from there to Pretoria. He told me that when they were marched through Kroonstad the British Tommies sang 'God Save the Queen' and 'The Soldiers of the Queen' at the top of their voices. After being in Pretoria for some time, the Major went into Burk's Hospital with a bad leg, which had troubled him for long. The last night must have been a great one for the prisoners (officers). The guard was composed of Hollanders. Well, on the last night, the commandant walked into the enclosure where our officers were, and he was immediately informed he was a prisoner. After some time the second in command came in to look for his chief, and he was made a prisoner. After this, all the officers made a dash for the guard, and told them their commandants were prisoners. The guard fled, and left their rifles. Our officers armed their servants and themselves with these rifles, and turned out. I had forgotten to say that the commandant had had orders to take the whole lot to Waterfall. As luck would have it, next morning the British troops marched in, otherwise they might all have been shot! Awfully plucky!

Have got back some of our prisoners (C.I.V. bat-

talion) taken at various places. They have had a very rough time, badly clothed and half-starved.

I will give you a few figures of the great march, which may be interesting, in Lord Roberts' own words:

'On May 12 Kroonstad was entered.

'On May 17 Mafeking was relieved.

'On May 31 Johannesburg was occupied.

'On June 5 the British flag waved over Pretoria.

'During these thirty-five days the main body of the force marched 300 miles, including fifteen days' halt, and engaged the enemy on six different occasions. The column under Lieutenant-General Ian Hamilton marched 400 miles in forty-five days, including a ten days' halt. It was engaged with the enemy twenty-eight times. The flying column under the command of Colonel B. Mahon, which relieved Mafeking, marched at the rate of nearly fifteen miles per day for fourteen consecutive days, and successfully accomplished its object, despite the determined opposition offered by the enemy.

'The newly-raised battalion of the City of London Imperial Volunteers marched 500 miles in fifty-one days, only once having two consecutive days' halt. The regiment (C.I.V.) took part in twenty-six engagements with the enemy.'

Pretoria Racecourse, June 11, 1900.

I quite forgot to mention in my last letter from here that I wired you:

'Safe, Pretoria, Bertie, Dossie';

and Lord Denbigh:

'Arrived Pretoria with eighteen H.A.C. fit; only four sick. Seen Wray (fit).—MOELLER.'

The battalion C.I.V. only stayed here one day, and then went on with Ian Hamilton's column to Irene, six miles from here, on the Pretoria-Delagoa Bay Railway.

Last Saturday (the 9th) I was orderly officer, and had to stay in camp. In the evening a Major Grant, of the Royal Engineers, came to dine with us. He was at Ladysmith, and got wounded at one of the minor engagements. He knows Michael Hodges (Lieutenant on the *Powerful*) very well, but said he was in hospital a great deal of the time with enteric fever. He spoke awfully well of him, however. It was extremely interesting to hear his account of the siege.

Sunday, June 10.—Went for a long walk with Wellby. It reminded me quite of being at home and having a Sunday walk. We went north-east of Pretoria to the highest peak in the Magaliesberg Range. It took us an hour to climb up to the top (between 1,000 and 1,500 feet), but when we got there we had the most marvellous view. South-east of us lay Pretoria and the Appies River; south was the Daspoort Range, a fine ridge of rock running parallel to the range we were on; north of us the country was fairly flat, with a few minor ridges here and there; whilst far away on the horizon was a ridge of mountains quite fifty miles off. Ten miles east we could see the camp of Broadwood's Cavalry Brigade. It was a magnificent sight, this huge stretch of country.

Well, after resting on the top for an hour, we went down the other side—a very steep descent. We went back by the Pietersburg-Pretoria Road, through Pretoria, and then back home, reaching camp at 5.

Monday, June 11.—Lord Rosslyn lunched with us to-day, and gave us an account of all his experiences. I won't write them down, interesting as they are, as you will read them all in the paper long before you get this letter.

Tuesday, June 12.—Quiet, uneventful day in camp; weather continues beautifully fine.

Wednesday, June 13.—Orderly officer to-day. At 11 o'clock I received orders from Divisional Headquarters for six more orderlies, and to proceed at once to guard and patrol railway between Koordespoort

(five miles east-north-east of Pretoria) and Silverton. Captain Reid sent Wellby and myself, with thirty men, on our fittest horses, and with a machine-gun. Left camp at 1.30 in full marching order. Arrived at Koordespoort, a cleft in the kopjes where the railway (Pretoria and Delagoa Bay) and main road run through, at 2.30. Wellby halted here, and I proceeded to patrol the line with Corporal Cooper and four men, and also to endeavour to get into touch with troops further east. Scouted the country for four miles, then arrived at a big bridge over the river, and a little further to a siding known as Silverton Siding. At this important point we were totally unguarded, as there were no troops within five miles; and as the enemy were known to be all round in small bodies sniping, I left Corporal Cooper and the four men to guard the bridge and siding for the night, while I myself returned to our little bivouac. We have a Scotch cart with us, with two days' rations. After having some supper, I and Sergeant Bradley, of No. 2 Section (an excellent, reliable man), proceeded to visit Cooper, who was four miles off, and very isolated. It was a brilliant moonlight night. We walked there, and found all quiet. I examined the bridge, and found it all right. It seems incredible that this place was unguarded for two nights, as not only does Lord Roberts use this line every day to watch operations of the Eleventh Division and Botha, but stores go out as well. I think it speaks well for us that they gave us this important bit of work. Returned to camp at 12, and arranged for patrols going out during the night.

Thursday, June 14.—Found out from last incoming patrol at 7 o'clock that all was well. Recommended Wellby to send back to Captain Reid for four more men and increase detached post at the bridge. He agreed. Proceeded after breakfast with eight men and a corporal to relieve Cooper. Two trains with provisions passed us. Arrived at bridge and siding, and found all intact. Patrolled line three miles

farther, and found Eleventh Division encamped six miles south of the line and Fourth Cavalry Brigade three and a half miles north of the line at Verbringen Station. Returned back to camp by road. Got in at 12.30, and lunched with Wellby. This afternoon remained in camp whilst Wellby patrolled country and kopjes due north of here. Hear that Little, of the C.I.V. Battalion (H.A.C.), was shot through both lungs at the action they were in some little time back. Botha was said to have been surrounded, but he seems to have gone away again.

In the afternoon sent out patrols and kept watch from our look-out post, where we had a machine-gun placed. After having a jolly little supper with Wellby, turned in for the night.

Friday, June 15.—Turned out at about 7. Found any amount of troops coming in—Eleventh Division Mounted Infantry and Cavalry Brigades. Unnecessary to go out on patrol. Sent message in to this effect, and asked if we could rejoin. Got word back late in the afternoon from our General Staff that we were to come in at once. Returned to camp on the racecourse at 7.30, and found everything at sixes and sevens, owing to having 300 remounts to look after. It appears that everybody who owned a horse in and about Pretoria had all their horses commandeered.

Saturday, June 16.—I am orderly officer to-day, and a very busy day it was, too. When I looked over the horses this morning I found every type of the equine race. There were Cape horses, Basuto ponies, Argentines, Spanish and Russians, English hackneys and thoroughbreds, about a dozen stallions, and a few racehorses. It was a rare job to get them all watered and fed. At 11 o'clock Major Smith, the principal veterinary officer, came to classify them, either for cavalry, artillery, Mounted Infantry, or transport, according to their build. Each horse was marked. All day long, too, the various owners came for the receipts. I enjoyed it, and so did most of us, as we got a good deal of

pretty rough riding. In the afternoon the army remount people fetched the majority away.

Sunday, June 17.—Still had about 100 horses left, and these were fetched away. I managed to bag a ripping gray English gelding. It took six men and myself two hours to catch him, and I spent another two hours breaking him in. A fine horse. I named him Pretorius. Although it was great sport having these horses, we were very glad to get rid of them, as they were a royal worry, especially at night. Several times I was woke up by horses careering over my bed. Major Smith was a good fellow! He really looked much like a German officer, with his blue eyes, fair hair, and well-turned moustache. He used wonderful tact to all the owners. We had a visit to-day from two very distinguished Boer ladies, who came, with an order signed by Lord Roberts, for their horses—Mrs. Lucas Meyer and Mrs. Botha. Both were better dressed and better looking than the usual run of women out here, who are ugly, stout, and untidy to a degree, and both spoke English fluently. Mrs. Botha informed us that her husband would hold out to the very last.

Monday, June 18.—A quiet, uneventful day in camp. Several of the C.I.V. infantry came over to see us. They have done very well, and have been in two very stiff engagements. Lieutenant Alt was killed in the last. Rode over in the evening to see Treffry. Found him out. Met my Captain at the infantry camp, and he told me I was to hold myself in readiness to move the first thing in the morning with as many fit men and horses as I could get with the Twenty-first Brigade, so I galloped back to camp and got all my kit together. On the way I met Treffry, and was very glad to see him.

Tuesday, June 19.—Started with twenty-one fit men and horses at 7 o'clock. Wellby came also, with his machine-guns. Reached Twenty-first Brigade at 8. Our C.I.V. battalion are in this brigade, as well as Captain Waterlow and No. 2 Company. Most of my

H.A.C. boys are either without horses just now or they are unfit. Reported to Captain Waterlow with my section, and joined his company. Had to leave Dick behind, as his horse's back was sore. I was very sorry. This is the first time we have been separated. The general idea was that the Twenty-first Brigade, under General Bruce Hamilton, together with the Mounted Infantry and Broadwood's Cavalry (composite 12th Lancers and 10th Hussars), were to march and take Heidelberg, which was held by the Boers, the whole force being under General Ian Hamilton. General Hart, with a detached brigade from Buller, was to meet us near Heidelberg.

Well, we started south-east, and marched at the head of the infantry. Marched through kopjes, and east of the railway between Pretoria, Irene, Elandsfontein (eleven miles), and halted at Irene—quite a new lease of life for me again, and most enjoyable! My new comrades are Waterlow, Concannon, Manisty, and Henderson, all first-rate good fellows. I saw Treffry in the evening, and we told each other all our experiences. By the way, Greenwell of the H.A.C. has got a commission in the C.I.V. battalion; I saw him to-night as well.

The only H.A.C. men I have with me are Corporal Cooper, Lance-Corporal Lobb, and Lance-Corporal Perkins, the rest being from all regiments.

Wednesday, June 20.—Started at 6.45, and marched to a place called Kaal. A quiet, uneventful march. Reached camp 2.30. No enemy, no news!

Thursday, June 21.—Started at 7.30, and marched east of Johannesburg to a little mining settlement called Springs. The weather turned bitterly cold. Thunderstorms, with hail and sleet—hailstones as big as sixpences; they sting like blazes when they come on your face! Everybody got soaked through and through. I never was so cold in all my life. The first battalion are thoroughly done up with their past long marches. We reached camp at Springs at 3 o'clock.

Our brigade consists of Camerons, Derbys, Sussex, C.I.V., and C.I.V. M.I. I managed to get an empty room for our little mess, where we made a fire and dried our things. Luckily we had three fowls, and our host's wife cooked us a good dinner. There was plenty of beer, too, and very welcome it all was! My men made themselves comfortable, and built themselves shelters of corrugated iron.

Friday, June 22.—Started at 7.30, and marched to within five miles of Heidelberg. I did plenty of scouting to-day, but, beyond a bit of sniping, there was no serious resistance. The country all along is undulating, with kopjes, but nearly all black, as the grass is burnt everywhere. We reached camp at 2.30, after having marched about twelve miles. Our camp faced several ridges of very high kopjes, which are between us and Heidelberg. At 4 o'clock two of our 4·7 guns silenced these kopjes at about 8,000 yards.

Saturday, June 23.—Started at 7, and marched at head of infantry. Hear that the Boers have evacuated Heidelberg. Well, it was a lovely morning, and we galloped all the distance to clear the way. It was a most enjoyable ride. Heidelberg is a small place, but most picturesquely situated. Most of the inhabitants seemed delighted to see us. We stayed here for a few hours, bought stores, had some lunch at a butcher's (hot beefsteak and potatoes out of a frying-pan), and then proceeded to our camp. The whole brigade are encamped on the railway—Pretoria-Heidelberg-Durban. The C.I.V. battalion are quartered in a large engine-shed. We personally have occupied an empty village. My men seem all very fit and well, and are in the best of spirits.

Heidelberg, Sunday, June 24.

Beautifully fine weather again, but nights colder than ever. I bathed this morning in ice and water. Our next-door neighbours (Dutch people) have lent us lamps and all sorts of little luxuries. The Boers

here have gone south; they are sure, however, to be caught by either Buller or Rundle.

By the way, General Hart's column has not turned up yet. Buller is at Standerton. Christian De Wet collared a convoy with the mails, and burnt 40 tons of mails and parcels for the troops! It is very probable you may not have received my letter. I wrote long ones from Kroonstad and Pretoria Racecourse. Let me know if you have received them. The remainder of No. 1 Company, under Captain Reid, is to rejoin us with the Twenty-first Brigade as soon as they can get remounts. They would have had these before, only it was at first settled they were to remain in Pretoria with the Seventh Division for garrison duty; but owing to Colonel Cholmondeley applying at headquarters for the whole of the C.I.V. M.I. to be reunited, Captain Reid got orders to rejoin the Twenty-first Brigade. The latest news in orders is: Archibald Hunter is due here to-morrow with a division, together with Colonel Mahon; two regiments are to remain in Heidelberg for garrison duty (probably Sussex and Derbys), and then a fresh force will be constituted under Hunter to trek further south, and round up all the isolated commandos of Boers. General Ian Hamilton was thrown from his horse the other day and broke his collar-bone, besides having internal injuries, so he won't go down with us. I am getting a pretty varied experience one way and another; have been in several divisions, and any amount of brigades, and have been on every duty imaginable. You would be surprised to see us quartered in a beautiful little villa with really fine country all round us, and doing ourselves well!

The day we got in here Roberts' Horse had a brush with the enemy, and lost four officers (one killed) and twenty men. So far I have been singularly lucky, and so have my men—as we have had a thousand and one brushes and skirmishes with the Boers, scouting on extreme flanks right through the campaign, and have not yet lost a single man.

Villiersdorp, Vaal River, June 30.

We left Heidelberg on Wednesday morning at 8.30 on our southward track. Our new General is Archibald Hunter. The force consists of: two cavalry brigades, under Gordon and Broadwood (Eastern Force); Twenty-first Brigade, with two other regiments, 5th and 7th Mounted Infantry (Western Force); C.I.V. M.I.; three batteries R.F.A.; one battery R.H.A.

We marched about eleven miles to a mine called Oceana, and halted there. The enemy is supposed to be about in small commandos, but we have not yet seen them. We went at the head of the infantry brigade; Mounted Infantry and cavalry cover the west of left flank, that flank being all kopjes and ridges.

Thursday, June 28.—Started at 8.30. Same order of march. Undulating, open country. General Hunter marched part of the way with us. He is young-looking, with a clean-cut face. Everybody likes him. A quiet, uneventful march. We halted and bivouacked for the night at a farm near a large lake called Bierlaagte, about fourteen miles from our last bivouac. We heard that Russia and Japan are at war, and that we are sending out troops from India to look after our interests. No enemy so far.

Friday, June 29.—Started at 8.30. Long march (seventeen miles). Scouted right out on right flank. No enemy. Flat, uninteresting country. A very cold wind. We reached Villiersdorp, Vaal River, at 3.30, and found Broadwood's and Gordon's cavalry brigades ready bivouacked on the southern side. At present there is no enemy, and all is quiet. We shall probably proceed to-morrow towards Frankfort, then on to Heilbron, and from thence to Kroonstad, where this force will be broken up. The C.I.V. will possibly, after that, proceed to Cape Town by rail, and then go home. Large quantities of Boers come in every day and give up their arms, and it seems to us as if we have reached the end, that only police-work is left.

Saturday, June 30.—We had reveille at 6.30, but no orders to move. A bitterly cold morning. Received orders to move at 1.30. The whole column and convoy of our supplies (fourteen days), about seven miles long, really started at 6.45 this morning to cross the drift of the Vaal. We ourselves did not make a start till 3.30 p.m., and we acted as flank guard to the Sussex battalion. We marched for three hours, and reached camp about six miles south of Frankfort. Concannon and his section were on the left flank. Our rear-guard, composed of Mounted Infantry with a pom-pom, had a bit of skirmishing with a few sniping Boers.

Sunday, July 1.—Marched off at 8 o'clock. Same order as yesterday, except that I was right flank guard and scouts to the Camerons. Open, undulating country. Soon after I started I spotted a flock of sheep about two miles on my right. I went out and rounded the whole lot in, about 300 or 400, and we drove them along with us. We marched about twelve miles and reached Frankfort, a small village lying in a hollow depression on the banks of the river Wilge. It is mostly composed of corrugated iron shanties, but the river is fairly broad. There is a fine road-bridge of six spans across the Wilge. We managed to get all the sheep into camp. I reported to our D.A.A.G., and handed them over to supply officer. Mutton will be very welcome, as we have had nothing but trek ox for some time. We are encamped right on the river bank. The weather is very cold, the winds biting; in fact, it is only warm when the sun comes out. I hear that Buller is at Vrede.

All the men I have with me are fit and well. We have very jolly dinners in the evenings, although it is so very cold. It would amuse you to see us at dinner in the open air round a table, all with overcoats or sweaters, and even blankets on!

Monday, July 2.—A very cold morning, everything covered in white frost, and the water frozen solid. No move to-day. I remained in camp and rested. In the

evening the battalion gave a very good smoking concert. Taffy recited, and recited very well too.

Tuesday, July 3.—No move to-day. Hector Macdonald expected with his Highland Brigade, details for P, Q, and R Batteries and 1,100 remounts, and perhaps mails. We all look forward to get the latter! This column comes from Heilbron. In all probability we shall go to Bethlehem, and then Standerton, instead of Heilbron. Nobody knows anything, however, for certain. Christian de Wet and his force are supposed to have retired to the Drakensberg Mountains. Steyn is at Bethlehem. Mails going out now (9.30 a.m.).

Cattle-truck between Wolvehoek and Pretoria,
Saturday, July 7.

I wrote last, I believe, from Frankfort, on Tuesday, July 3. On Wednesday morning, July 4, we all got orders rather suddenly to saddle up ready to go. Colonel Mackinnon and C.I.V. battalion and 175 Mounted Infantry (Eastern Provinces Horse) were escorting an empty convoy to Heilbron. I joined this column with Perkins and my servant Croxon. We took our horses as well. We had a bit of a rush getting our kits transferred. I had to go back to Pretoria to give some evidence at a court-martial on a soldier. Reported myself to Colonel Mackinnon. The column marched at 2.30 p.m. Made myself useful to Colonel Mackinnon by being galloper for him, scouting and doing odd jobs. Our Mounted Infantry rearguard exchanged a few shots with some Boers who were trying to harass our rear, but it was mere sniping. We crossed Frankfort Bridge safe and sound covered by a section of artillery. Our force consisted of: 600 Infantry (C.I.V. battalion), 150 Mounted Infantry (Eastern Provinces Horse), three guns (R.F.A.), 120 waggons, under Colonel Mackinnon. We marched nine miles west-south-west, and halted. A bitterly cold night. Messed with the infantry. All sterling good fellows.

Thursday, July 5.—Reveille at 6. Frightfully cold water —solid blocks of ice. Twenty degrees frost. Breakfasted and started at 8 o'clock. Same as yesterday (galloper, etc., to Colonel Mackinnon). The Colonel is a delightful man, and is loved and respected by everybody in the battalion; he is a fine soldier, leader, and friend. Enemy again reported on our right front by Mounted Infantry. Saw them, between twenty and thirty men, near a farm four miles off. Our guns plugged them while the convoy was shoved along. This happened during lunch. I had a long talk with the Colonel. Bailey is a first-rate Adjutant and a good fellow. Very long march—twenty-one miles. Reached Heilbron at 6.30 p.m. A bitterly cold night again! Hear our battery is at Kroonstad, and that they have been in action. I was very glad to hear it. We could not move any further that evening.

Friday, July 6.—Reveille at 6. A very cold, fine morning again. Breakfasted at 8, then went over with Colonel Mackinnon to the station. Wired General Officer Commanding Seventh Division saying I should arrive at Pretoria late Saturday night, and asked for my evidence to be taken at once, as I had to return to my regiment as soon as possible. I also found about fifty mail-bags for the C.I.V., including twenty-one bags for the Mounted Infantry. Colonel Mackinnon asked me to sort the mails for the Mounted Infantry, and take No. 1 Company's mails with me, and to leave the rest. I returned to camp, and, with the assistance of Corporal Perkins and my servant, sorted the mails. Mighty hard work it was; it took four hours! My train started 5.20 p.m.

I took all my kit, but left horses. Lord Albemarle came with us. He is second in command of battalion. One word about Heilbron. It is a small town, of about 2,000 inhabitants, and is very prettily situated. We found large stores at the station—about 40,000 bags of oats, besides quantities of boxes of biscuits and bully. Our train consisted of empty cattle-trucks.

There was only room for one in the guard's van, and I kept that for Lord Albemarle. I travelled with my servant and Perkins. It was a bitterly cold but a brilliant moonlight night. We went on till we got to Wolvehoek, on the main-line Pretoria-Bloemfontein-Cape Town. Reached there 10.30. All had to clear out. Next train was full up of stores for Pretoria. Had supper and cocoa—the hot water was drawn from the steam of an engine; a novel way of making cocoa this! Slept in the station—only a tin hut.

Saturday, July 7.—Turned out at 6.30 by station-master. Found train of remounts going north. All got into the guard's van. The cold is simply awful; it reminded me of Russia—the flat country, white frost, and the brilliant rising sun. A young subaltern in the Canadian Mounted Infantry was taking his horse up, with about 250 men. Very decent fellow and highly interesting; he came from the Canadian Mounted Police. Went slowly on and reached Vaal River (Vereeniging) at about 10 o'clock. Got to Elandsfontein at 12.30—a large station, being the main-line junction for Johannesburg. Watered horses and started at 2.30. Two Majors joined us here, one in the Highlanders and one in the Gordons. We travelled very slowly and reached Pretoria at 7 o'clock. Went to Transvaal hotel. What luxury! I had a good dinner and a gorgeous bedroom. This is the first time I have slept between sheets since I left England!

Sunday, July 8.—Got up at 6.30; had bath and breakfast. Then reported myself to D.A.A.G. Seventh Division. Court-martial was held at once, at the artillery barracks. I was very glad I sent that telegram, as they were only waiting for mine and Perkins' evidence. The court-martial was held in the new artillery barracks, and very fine ones they are, too! There is nothing to touch them in England; a huge pile of red-brick buildings with a splendid installation of electric light. I went and gave my evidence, which was not much. The court consisted of a Colonel

and two Captains. I was not cross-examined. Returned to hotel and sent off some telegrams and did various things for Colonel Mackinnon and Colonel Cholmondeley. Several of the men out of my section are still on duty as orderlies to General Tucker.

A big forward movement is going on in Pretoria to catch Botha; Seventh (Tucker's) and Eleventh Divisions are mobilizing.

General Hutton seems to have had a severe knock at Erstefabriken, the place near Silverton which I patrolled some little while back, near Pretoria (you remember, where an important bridge was left unguarded). General French has gone out with a brigade to assist. General Buller is here. His train was shelled coming up. I understand that the Pretoria-Natal line is now open.

Monday, July 9.—A lovely cold morning. Started after breakfast for station. We left at 10.45, and reached Elandsfontein at 2.30 p.m. I picked up here with the most delightful man I have seen for some time, Lieutenant-Colonel Capper, R.E., a fine fellow and, I should think, a fine soldier. I had long talks with him about China, Royal Marines, etc. Doing all bridging along the line and has command of all sappers north of Bloemfontein. He travelled with us as far as Wolvehoek. He has been through the Tirah campaign. We reached Wolvehoek, where we had to turn out at 7.30, and managed to get supper and a fairly comfortable room to sleep in.

Tuesday, July 10.—A magnificent morning, but very cold. Got up at 6 and all breakfasted. We left for Heilbron at 7.30, and reached here at 10 o'clock. I am very glad to get back.

July 12.—A big empty convoy came in yesterday, which is to fill up from stores here, and then proceed to Hunter's column at Bethlehem. The convoy was escorted by the Derbys and 5th and 6th Mounted Infantry. I am going out with this column. The C.I.V. battalion remain at Heilbron for the present.

A beautiful day. I got a few stores for the march, also had my clothes washed, and enjoyed a jolly dinner in the evening with all the fellows. Captain Bailey, the Adjutant, made a fine rum punch. There is no news otherwise. Colonel Mackinnon has got me attached to the 7th Mounted Infantry, under Major Welch. I went over to see him this afternoon; he asked me to join his mess. I got Croxon and Perkins attached as well. I am very sorry, though, in a way, to leave the battalion; I have had a ripping good time with them, and they have all been good to me—Colonel Mackinnon absolutely one of the best.

PART III

UNDER COLONEL BAINBRIDGE WITH THE 7TH MOUNTED INFANTRY; FIGHTING AT BETHLEHEM, NAAUWPOORT NECK, GOLDEN GATE, COX'S FARM, HEILBRON.

Friday, July 13.—Got my kit and baggage over to Mounted Infantry camp. Started at 8 o'clock a.m. south-west towards Lindley. Went with Major Welch and a mighty big convoy of 250 waggons, escorted by the Derbys, No. 1 Company Camerons, 76th Battery Artillery, 300 Mounted Infantry (5th and 7th); Commandant, Colonel Ewart.

Rather a small escort for so big a convoy with stores and ammunition. Just think! The length of the convoy in single file is seven and a half miles, and it takes three and a half hours for it to cross a place like a drift. We marched with advanced guard, and reached our camp (Witberg), about ten miles south-west of Heilbron, at 2.30 p.m. I lunched with Major Welch. In the evening Morris (a Lieutenant in the Berkshire Regiment and the 7th Mounted Infantry), Major Welch, and I dined together. We have fine brilliant weather, but pass through dull, undulating country; all the grass is burnt black.

Saturday, July 14.—Started at 6.30 a.m. It was really infernally cold. Marched on right flank, and had command of a section of Mounted Infantry. By the way, I got my horse again at Heilbron; he turned out a real good 'un! No enemy visible; all quiet; the country very bare. Halted for three hours in the middle of

the day in order to allow oxen to feed and water, and reached Rhenoster River at 4 p.m. A very awkward drift here. We camped on the southern side for the night. The convoy took all night crossing the drift.

Sunday, July 15.—As the waggons had not finished crossing the Rhenoster till 5 this morning, we did not start till 9 o'clock. A very cold morning. I managed to roll out of my valise in the night, and woke up at about 5 o'clock, awfully cold and covered with white frost.

Marched south-west in advanced guard. In the far distance south-east of us we could see the mountains of Basutoland (Maluti Mountains). The country improves; it is more rugged. We passed sites of old battles as we marched to a drift over a small spruit about six or seven miles north of Lindley; we reached this place at 2.30 p.m., and got orders to camp here. No enemy seen or heard of; all is quiet.

Monday, July 16.—Started early this morning. It is very cold. Reveille 3.45 a.m.; breakfast by moonlight on the veldt at 4.30; march off at 5. I had command of a section to-day again and scouted on extreme right centre flank of convoy.

A magnificent sunrise, and fine, broken, rugged country. Saw positions where the first fight occurred, and also the place where the 350 Yeomanry were entrapped and taken prisoners near Lindley. We also came across the body of one of our dead. Poor fellow! he had been dead too long for identification. We reached Lindley at 11.30 a.m. It is a small village lying in a hollow, with the river Valsch flowing through it, meandering in and out of steep gorges. All round are high rugged ridges, and far away south one sees the magnificent mountains of Basutoland. We crossed the Valsch River at 11.45, and camped at 12.15 p.m., about one mile south-south-west of Lindley. Found Bedfordshire Regiment in garrison here. They come with us to-morrow. No enemy; all quiet. I am

personally sorry for this, as I should like to have a bit of fighting—the scouting gets so monotonous without an enemy. Mounted Infantry excellent men, not quite so intelligent as C.I.V. M.I., perhaps, but better disciplined. A beautiful day; we lunched when we got into camp. In the evening I walked round and saw all our recent trenches. A jolly dinner in the evening with Morris and Major Welch; afterwards we sat round the fire and chatted.

Tuesday, July 17.—Reveille again very early, 4.30 a.m., and march off at 5.45. Marched to-day as left flank guard and scouts; we were not far from a large farm recently burnt out, which belonged to a Boer who had come in and surrendered, and had then gone out on commando again. Got orders to keep a sharp look-out, as 1,500 Boers and a Boer convoy would probably cross our front to-day. Hunter sent this information by a despatch-rider from Bethlehem. Had several false alarms. Right flank came into touch with a few Boers and shot one. Evidently the commando came to join De Wet from Senegal, found they could not, and then scattered about in small bodies. This was confirmed by an English farmer this afternoon. We hear that General Clements had a stiff action about a week ago with De Wet, and defeated him; heard also that Paget came across the 1,500 Boers and convoy, and was unable to dislodge them; evidently he got a knock. I came across an Englishman who has twice been a prisoner of the Boers; he told me all his experiences. He is a colonial Englishman. His farm was near Lindley and his dairy in Johannesburg; he sold cattle to the English when the war broke out. Then he was taken prisoner by the Boers, escaped, and became one of our intelligence men and despatch-riders. After that he was taken prisoner by De Wet and kept chained up; he escaped again ten days ago and joined General Clements. Since then he was sent on to us. He told me De Wet occupies a strong position near Bethlehem, in the mountains,

that he has 10,000 men, of which one-third are probably fighting men, and twelve cannons. All seem getting faint-hearted, except Christian De Wet and the other Commandants. He is now acting as guide and intelligence chap to our Commanding-Officer, Colonel Ewart.

We all halted for two hours to allow oxen to feed and water; then we started again at 2.30. The country is getting finer and finer, if far more rugged and broken. In the distance are the snow-covered peaks of Basutoland. All is quiet, except for a bit of sniping right away on our right flank.

Report received that an empty convoy, escorted by Roberts' Horse, was proceeding towards Senekal, eight miles on right flank. A long, tedious day; we reached camp at an unknown place, twelve and a half miles south-south-east of Lindley, at 5.30 p.m. The veldt here is covered with thick, long dry grass; there were any amount of veldt fires. As soon as we got into camp we made a huge fire, and sat round it till dinner. I had a jolly evening, and turned in at 8.30 p.m. My horse Pretorius is fit and well, and going strong.

Wednesday, July 18.—Last night we received all sorts of orders. First of all we were to march off at 12 midnight. Then that was cancelled, and we were ordered to move off at 5.15 this morning.

Reveille at 4 o'clock; bitterly cold morning. Turned out at once, washed, rolled up my valise, and my servant stowed it away. Hardly had I done this when orders came in that we were not to move before 8 o'clock, General Broadwood having sent a despatch-rider to wait for him. I lit a big fire, and sat and warmed myself. Had breakfast at 7. At 8 o'clock Broadwood's force arrived: 10th Hussars, 12th Lancers, Compots, Ridley's Mounted Infantry, two R.H.A. Batteries, two pom-poms.

Extraordinary news! De Wet and Steyn got through our outposts the night before last with 1,500 men and six guns, of which one is captured and one disabled. This was the force we heard of yesterday,

which Paget tried to dislodge, but was unable to; and this was the lot our right-flank scouts came in touch with. De Wet and Steyn actually bivouacked five miles north-west of us without our knowing he was there, or he that we were here! Well, we all started at 9 o'clock. Broadwood went off north-west to Reitz, with his flying force, after De Wet; we just crossed two drifts over a spruit (very awkward drift for waggons), and camped within two miles of our last camp at a place called Sterpfontein. We could not proceed further, as the waggons will take all day to cross. Broadwood filled up his convoy from our supply column, and took the Derbys to guard his baggage. We lunched at 2 o'clock. A fine, warm day. In the evening 150 Mounted Infantry (7th M.I.), together with 40 of our C.I.V. M.I. (under Concannon and Manisty), joined us, the force being under Colonel Bainbridge. These came from Reitz, and were escorting Engineers who were repairing the line. Captain Lloyd of the 7th Mounted Infantry dined with us to-night.

Thursday, July 19.—Reveille at 4, and march off at 5.15 a.m. We were rear-guard to-day to the convoy, consequently we did not move off till 7.30. Went over to see Concannon and Manisty. All is well with us. They have forty fit men and horses. I hear our horses are rather done up. No news! A bitterly cold morning. I went out to a farm on extreme right flank, but found the owner was on commando with De Wet, so told my men to help themselves to chickens and turkeys. I also informed the worthy lady that if her husband did not come into Bethlehem within a week to give up arms, we should be reluctantly compelled to burn the place down. Best way, now! We ought to have gone on this tack all along; we can never get the war over otherwise, we have been far too lenient. This farm in question belongs to the redoubtable Prinsloo. It has turned beautifully warm; the sun is blazing hot. I am sitting by the roadside writing this.

Bethlehem—Lindley.—Except my men, no one is in sight. A magnificent country, but all black, as the grass is burnt as far south as the mountains of Basutoland, while in the east there is a huge veldt fire. Close by about twenty vultures are feeding on a dead horse.

We proceeded on our way, and reached Bethlehem at 6 p.m. Major Welch asked me if I would remain with the 7th Mounted Infantry, and I said I would if my Commanding Officer had no objection. I went over, and found Colonel Cholmondeley and Captain Waterlow with No. 2 Company and the twenty men of No. 1 Company here in camp. I asked Colonel Cholmondeley if he had any objection to my joining 7th Mounted Infantry, and he said he had none, and would think about it. Returned to 7th Mounted Infantry. By the way, I also gave over all the mails I brought from Heilbron. C.I.V. M.I. had no fighting lately; that is the reason I want to get into a fighting lot, and 7th Mounted Infantry see nearly all. Besides, my own men are scattered about all over the country as orderlies and police. Late at night 7th Mounted Infantry received orders to rendezvous at the Kaffir town just east of Bethlehem. I thought this meant a fighting job, so decided to cast in my lot with them, and told Major Welch so. He kindly said he was awfully glad to have me.

Bethlehem, Friday, July 20.—First of all, Bethlehem is a little town of about 2,000 inhabitants. It is situated at the beginning of the hills and mountains running south to Basutoland—a fine country. About a mile to the east is the Kaffir town, inhabited by about 2,000 Kaffirs. Orders: Reveille 6.30, and march off 7.45. Marched off. I had command of a section in No. 1 Company, under Lieutenant Morris (Berkshire Regiment). All rendezvoused at 8 o'clock, just south of Kaffir town. Our force consists of: 7th Mounted Infantry (Major Welch), 150 men; 5th Mounted Infantry (Major Lane), 100 men; Scottish

Yeomanry, 100 men; 82nd Battery R.A. (did so well at Diamond Hill), Cameron Highlanders. All are under General Bruce Hamilton.

Marched off at 8.30. The idea seems to take a position known as Spitzkop, about ten miles south of Bethlehem, and commanding a pass (Naauwpoort Pass). The enemy is supposed to consist of from anything between 500 and 2,000 men and six guns.

We proceeded—Camerons, 82nd Battery, and Scottish Yeomanry on main road south, whilst 7th and 11th Mounted Infantry went a wide détour round the left. I was on the extreme left, scouting. This is my first experience of hilly country. I watched a long valley and gorge. Received orders to close in on the right immediately. Did so, and joined our main body of Mounted Infantry on top of a huge ridge, overlooking a plateau interspersed with Kaffir kraals and mealie fields. Fifth Mounted Infantry, proceeding down the ridge and across plateau, were met with a hot fire from the kraals. I saw two men hit. At the same time we received a heavy fire from a kopje on our left; but we returned fire, and silenced our neighbours. Then we proceeded to climb down the kopje with our horses, and held a fortified kraal, whilst 5th Mounted Infantry pushed the Boers away out of the kraals south and in front of us. We—that is, 7th Mounted Infantry—held the Boers on that kopje.

We stayed here well under cover of the stone walls, and kept up a desultory fire. At dusk we all moved into camp, having got about half-way to Spitzkop. We had five casualties: Captain Hobson, 5th Mounted Infantry, two Yeomanry, two 7th Mounted Infantry, and about ten horses killed. Reached camp at dusk, 6.30, hungry and tired; had dinner and turned in at 9 o'clock.

Saturday, July 21.—Camp five miles south of Bethlehem. Our orders for to-day are reveille 5.15 p.m., move off at 7. Continuation of yesterday's work. Moved off at 7, east-south-east, guarding left flank to

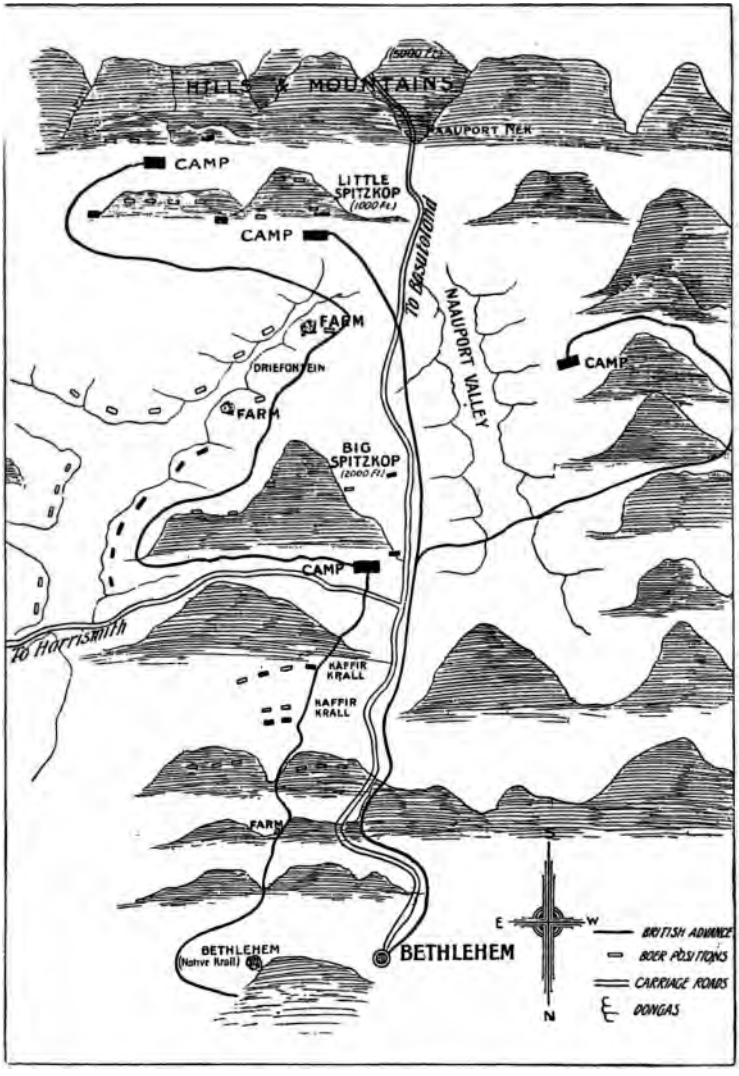
the Camerons and battery, who were main advanced, as before. We got clear of our camp, then extended to two horses' lengths with left scouts. We got sniped at from a ridge in front, but dismounted and took the ridge. Then we came to a large plateau surrounded by hills. Here we formed a broad front, with 7th Mounted Infantry on the left, and 5th Mounted Infantry on the right. This plateau rises slightly to south-east. We left our horses near the crest under cover, and advanced in skirmishing order. Heavy firing began. From the crest the plateau fell away a bit to east and overlooked a deep, broad valley with four large kopjes opposite us, and deep gullies running up each of the high hills beyond. To our right was a gradually-rising plateau on the other side of the deep gorge. Bullets were falling fast and thick. Here I got orders to double and hold the last gorge, and prevent Boers from coming up it. This was at 10.30 a.m. Doubled there, amidst a perfect hail of bullets. Reached the edge, where there were big rocks and stones, and took cover. Got out glasses and had look round. All four kopjes held by Boers. Started firing 1,700 to 1,800 yards. All lying flat behind rocks. As soon as one lifted one's head, pip-pop —pip-pop—phut! came the bullets all round. The very hottest place I have ever been in! Saw my men well under cover. At 11.30 there was a big puff of white smoke on the rising plateau to my right front, and about ten seconds afterwards I heard the report of a heavy gun. A shell burst about 100 yards behind me, where we had a pom-pom and machine-gun. A look through glasses, and I saw four guns about 5,000 yards off. Pom-pom replied, but no good—outranged. Then commenced a rare shelling. Shells burst all round us, and close by. Two burst simultaneously, so close, that dust and stones flew all over us. Every puff of smoke I saw I wondered if my last moment had come. This went on all day. I was in this gorge, watching it, from 10.30 a.m. till dusk, 5.30 at night. Although we had several near shaves and grazes, none of my

men were actually hit. We used up all our ammunition—200 rounds per man. They had some casualties in the other companies. Several were killed and wounded amongst them. Captain Hamilton, our staff officer, had a shell wound on his head. We knocked over several Boers. The firing ceased at dusk, and the retire was given. Returned to camp, and camped just under a large kopje about 2,000 feet high. The Camerons took this to-day, and lost three killed, with two officers and twenty-five men wounded. Our camp is ten miles south-south-east of Bethlehem. Had dinner at 7.30, dead-tired and very hungry. Turned in at 9.

Sunday, July 22.—Reveille at 5 a.m. Moved off at 6.15. Continuation of yesterday's operations. Mounted Infantry guarding left flank again. Moved to same position as yesterday, with 82nd Field Battery to support us. To-day we first held a ridge, to cover advance of 5th and 7th Mounted Infantry, and then remained in support with the horses.

Our line was the same as yesterday, only a little further back; but the firing is not so heavy to-day, our guns—posted on top of hill overlooking the valley—kept them quiet. At 10.30 a.m. Boer guns came up, and shelling began again. With the exception of one or two shells and a few stray bullets, nothing came our way; our guns, though, had to shift their position. The general idea is—Mounted Infantry hold the left, whilst Camerons advance and General Hunter and Highland Brigade with two 4·7 guns are taking a pass to south-west of us—all to block up the Boers in the mountains. A bitterly cold day. Stayed all day, till 5.30, dusk, and then returned to same camp. Several casualties again to-day, and several of our horses hit. Had dinner at 7, and turned in at 9. Terrific hurricane and blizzard and snow, so got into Major's tent. The cold is awful. I spent most of the night holding the tent down. Went to sleep at 3 a.m. The Camerons remained in camp to-day, and sat tight.

Monday, July 23.—Reveille 5.30, moved off at 6.45.



FIGHTING ROUND BETHLEHEM JULY, 1900.
(*From a rough sketch drawn from memory.*)

Continuation of yesterday's operations. Mounted Infantry took up same position as before, about three miles from camp. I was in the centre to-day; only a little firing. Bitterly cold in the snow, but a fine sight—all the mountains covered in snow, and white with the fleecy clouds blowing about them. We kept up a desultory fire. At 2.30 p.m. we got orders to leave this. All rejoined horses, and galloped to the big kopje where we camp. We here joined in a general attack on the Boer position on kopjes and plateau, due south across a wide valley, and just under the mountains. Seventh Mounted Infantry on left, Camerons centre, with 82nd and 76th Batteries, and on right 5th Mounted Infantry with machine-guns—two being the C.I.V. M.I. guns, under my old friend Wellby. All gradually advanced, we covering the left against a possible attack from the left (where we had only a company of 7th Mounted Infantry), to our original position. A heavy fire commenced from the kopjes. Our guns started, and the shells burst well on the top of the Boer positions. I could see the Boers shifting, through my glasses. The position proved too strong to take to-day, and, besides, it was getting dark. Just at 5 o'clock we came in for a heavy fire from a kopje to our front, and from about 2,000 to 2,500 yards off. All got under cover of ant-heaps and fired back. Waited here till 6.30, when dark, keeping up a desultory fire. All then retired back to camp under our big kopje. Major Welch and Malta Company 7th Mounted Infantry remained out all night. Here Wellby did very well with our C.I.V. M.I. machine-guns, and made a Boer gun retire; in fact, he was complimented by the General (Bruce Hamilton). I am very glad, as he is a sterling good fellow, and a very keen soldier; glad also as it is the first time the machine-guns came into action. I hear that General Hunter and the Highland Brigade have been fighting all day on our right. Had dinner at 7, and afterwards went over to see Colonel Cholmondeley, who is with the column as

escort to supply waggons. I asked him if he minded my being with 7th Mounted Infantry *pro tem.*, and he said not at all, so long as I rejoined if C.I.V. M.I. left the brigade. Except Wellby, none of them have seen any fighting, so I am very glad I came with the 7th Mounted Infantry.

Tuesday, July 24.—No orders to-day—a welcome rest in camp. Major Welch came in at 10 this morning. Got sudden orders to move and saddle up in half an hour. We moved off just behind—or east of—our big kopje (known as Big Spitzkop) and watched all ground; in fact, were a rear-guard, whilst we and our waggons changed camp. Our force as rear-guard was 7th Mounted Infantry. Remained here from 2 till 5.30, dark, then moved off to hills west of Big Spitzkop. Moved right on to hills. Came on column, frequent halts, pitch-dark. It was very slow work, as the waggons had to cross the gorges and to go up a gradual steep incline of about 1,060 feet. The general idea seems to get together with Highland Brigade under General Macdonald. It is bitterly cold! Several waggons are disabled through broken wheels, dead oxen, etc. Ultimately we reached camp at 12 o'clock, dead-tired and cold. We had coffee and biscuits, and turned into bed.

Wednesday, July 25.—Reveille at 5; moved off at 6.15, right flank scouts to our right flank guard (7th Mounted Infantry); 5th Mounted Infantry advanced guard. Marched south-west, and halted—as observation post is on high ridge—by order to look out for Macdonald's force. Spotted his left flank scouts at 10.30 a.m. Reported, and then moved off south-east. Here joined our main body of 7th Mounted Infantry. All galloped out to a farm half-way between Little Spitzkop (the kopje we tried to take the other day) and Big Spitzkop (the distance between these two is about four miles, Little Spitzkop being due south of Big Spitzkop). Here we halted. The Malta company (part of the 7th Mounted Infantry) had orders

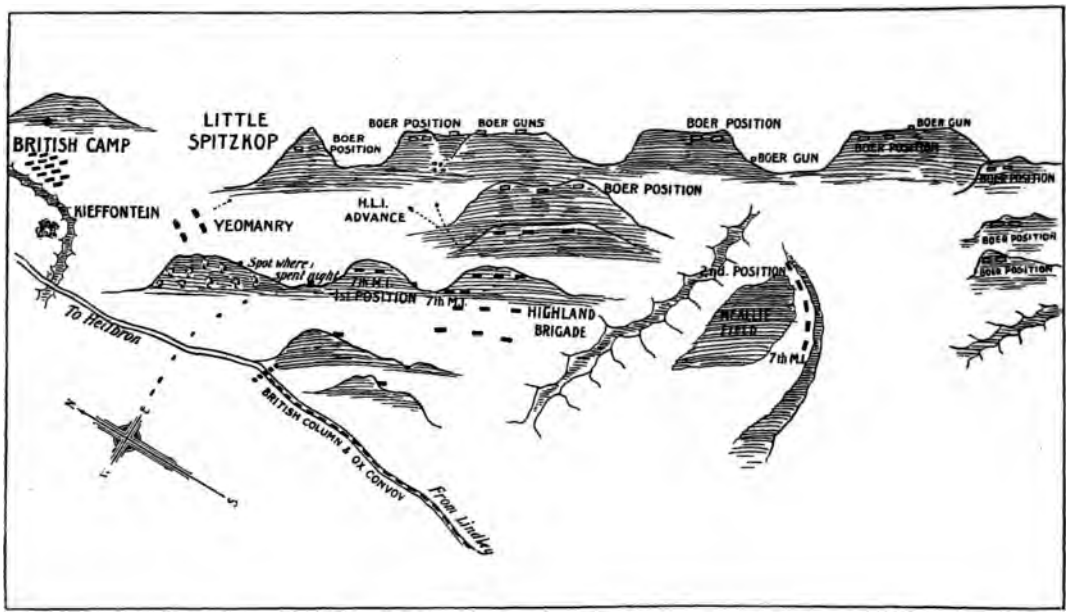
early in the day to reconnoitre Little Spitzkop, and see if it were still held by the Boers. At 3 p.m. they had not returned. Our Commanding Officer anxious. He sent me at 3.30 to go and look for them, and to bring them in, with orders to retire as soon as fired upon. Proceeded to Little Spitz and took ten men with me. Galloped in extended order. Close to Little Spitz, and running north and south, is a donga, and 1,000 yards beyond a wire fence. Watched donga, cut wire fence, and galloped up to within 1,500 yards of the west corner of Little Spitz. Here I had a good look through glasses. Found some Boers on top, and also two Boer guns on the low flat kopje of Little Spitz. At this point we came in for heavy fire. Mounted, gave 'Files about,' 'Scatter,' and rode off like blazes amidst a regular fusillade.

Got back safe and sound, and luckily there are no casualties. Went back to our farm, and found that the Malta Company had gone to the wrong place altogether, but had just come in safe and sound. Been to Big Spitz! However, I was able to give all the information that was wanted. Returned to camp at 6 p.m. Macdonald's Brigade in company with us. A long, tiring day; but I had a jolly dinner with Major Welch, Morris, and Ferrars, a subaltern in the Welsh Fusiliers and in 7th Mounted Infantry, who has, like me, attached himself to 7th Mounted Infantry. My section belongs to the Hampshire Company. Our camp is half-way between Little and Big Spitzkop, and four miles west of these. It may seem curious that in the last twenty-four hours we have done an almost semi-circular trek, but the reason was to join Macdonald's Brigade in the hills. General Hunter is, I believe, on our right. I don't quite understand the manœuvres; I may be enlightened to-morrow.

Thursday, July 26.—Reveille 4; moved off at 5.15 a.m. The general idea to-day was to take Little Spitzkop and the first ridge of hills beyond. The main attack was to be on the extreme right by Macdonald's

Brigade, and the centre attack the Camerons and guns, whilst the left flank attack was to be 7th and 5th Mounted Infantry. On our left flank was known to be a commando of Boers. We started two or three hours earlier than the rest, as we had to work right round Big Spitzkop and Little Spitzkop, and occupy all commanding positions on the left. Carried this out. All went well. Worked right across the Naauwpoort Plateau and Big Spitzkop to near a farm just west of Little Spitzkop. This farm lay in a hollow, but was commanded by a high ridge. From here our advanced scouts came in for a heavy fire. All dismounted, and formed a firing-line, with Yeomanry in support. Started at 1,800 yards, and fired at each halt. Hot fire from the Boers; we doubled down one slope, and then rushed the next. The Boers retreated, and as they were getting on their horses we gave it them hot. Advanced then on to the farm. Here we stayed, and formed an outpost line; cleared the farm of all forage and livestock, and burnt the outhouses. I was sent to another farm about one and a half miles south-west. Had no opposition. Stayed there till dusk, and then had orders to return to camp. I hear that the general attack was very successful. Little Spitzkop was taken, and also the ridge beyond. I have not yet heard about the casualties. We ourselves had two wounded. The main body camped just south of Little Spitzkop; we camp three miles further on, just under the first ridge of hills. I feel very sorry for the farms, but it has to be done.

Friday, July 27.—Reveille at 5. Camp stands for to-day. I had orders to proceed at once, and form part of an outpost line guarding the left. I had thirty men. Proceeded to Driefontein Farm (the place we took yesterday), and throughout the observation posts overlooking all the country on my left. King's Own Scottish Borderers Company 7th Mounted Infantry was on my right. All seemed quiet. I went round, and had a good look about. Heavy firing on my right rear; ascertained



PLAN OF BATTLE NEAR COX'S FARM, KIEFFONTEIN.

afterwards that it was our 5-inch gun driving the Boers out of Naauwpoort Nek. There was a desultory sniping all round. I returned to the farm and had some lunch, which the good woman here cooked for me, with some coffee. I am writing this part of the letter in the garden. I have also drawn a rough map by memory to give you some idea of the position here, and to illustrate this rather mixed-up letter. At 2 o'clock Ferrars came to relieve me. I hear that our casualties are rather heavier than I thought: in Mounted Infantry six men killed, and three officers and twenty men wounded. We hold Naauwpoort Nek, Boers trekking off east. We shall probably follow them up to-morrow.

This is a grand, if rugged, country, but a very difficult one for fighting. One has to be awfully cautious. The weather is fine, but very cold at night, and the days are rather chilly as well. I am really happy; the life suits me down to the ground. The 7th Mounted Infantry are a very good lot; they are made up of the following regimental companies of Mounted Infantry: Hampshire Company (mine), Lieutenant Morris; King's Own Scottish Borderers Company, Captain Robertson; Norfolk Company, Captain Paterson; Lincoln Company, Captain Lloyd; Malta Company, Captain Marshall (all under Major Welch); Derbys; Warwicks; Lancashire Fusiliers; Royal North Lancashire.

Saturday, July 28.—Hooray! To-day is my birthday. As there is nobody else to do it, I am wishing myself many happy returns.

We had reveille at 4.15, and moved off at 5.30 (7th Mounted Infantry advanced guard). My section advanced scouts. Moved east-south-east, on road towards Harrismith, at the foot of high kopjes and mountains. I had orders to go on and occupy a high kopje supposed to be occupied by Boers, and to hold it till the infantry (Camerons) came up. Galloped on, dismounted at the foot of the kopje, and ascended. Awful fag; about 800 feet steep ascent. Reached the

top safe and sound. All clear. Got out my glasses, and discovered Boers—about thirty of them—on a kopje opposite, about 1,800 yards off. I got my men well hidden, and opened with volleys. The Boers could not make out where the fire came from, and soon shifted. Then we came in for a heavy fire, but we were well under cover, therefore all right. The main column came along the road, and the left flank, which was open country, was crossed by the remainder of the 7th Mounted Infantry. They came in for a very heavy fire from a high ridge in front, and there were several casualties. Our guns came up at 8.30, and started shelling all these kopjes vigorously. The general firing continued for two hours; then all advanced, with the baggage coming up in the rear. As soon as the infantry came up we ascended our kopje. I got orders to rejoin my Captain. Then we trotted on, and crossed a drift, moved right across to left flank, and rejoined the main force of the 7th Mounted Infantry, who were holding a long ridge. But we could move no further, as the Boers were holding one of the stiffest positions I have ever seen, and keeping up a heavy fire. The Boer position was a succession of huge ridges, quite 2,000 feet high. Then the guns were ordered up. I was just behind the battery, and saw them work; they shelled all positions. At 12 noon my Captain received orders to seize a position about one and a half miles to our left front. We galloped on under fire, and I received orders to seize a Kaffir kraal on a ridge, and cover his advance. I did so, and met a very heavy fire; got men and horses under cover. But I could not locate the Boer fire for some time. When I at last located it, we gave it them hot. We remained for two hours, and had a long palaver with the Kaffirs, who cooked me and my men some eggs, and gave us some Kaffir beer. Receiving orders to rejoin company at 3 p.m., I proceeded up an enormous kopje, and, after an hour's climbing, reached the top, and again came in for a heavy fire. We had several

casualties. By Jove! it makes one think a bit when the bullets are falling, and one sees some poor fellow suddenly drop and lie kicking. The Boers retired; we held the ridge till dusk. Then we received orders to remain here all night. The camp is three miles off. I sent back for blankets and grub. No fodder for the horses! Major Welch asked me if I could get some. I remembered the Kaffir kraal. Took ten men with me, proceeded down this huge kopje, reached the kraal, and, after a long palaver, got 150 lbs. of mealies (maize) and firewood. I gave a receipt. In order to write this I went inside the chief kraal; thirty men, women, and children were sitting round a dried cow-dung fire. It was all clean, but the heat was awful. I wrote receipt, and took two hours to get back in the dark. Then, the blankets and grub having arrived, we had supper, and turned in at 11. Patrolled our out-post line at 2 and 4 a.m. All correct and quiet. An eventful birthday, was it not?

Sunday, July 29.—Reveille 5. At 6 received orders to return to camp, but to leave a post out. Returned to camp at 7.30, and had a hurried breakfast. By the way, heavy firing was heard far away on the right, evidently Hunter and Paget in action. Seventh Mounted Infantry received orders to gallop and take position on left flank again. Galloped off, and left the horses at the foot of the same high ridge as yesterday. Climbed up to the top, and again came in for a heavy fire, with the result that several horses and men were hit. Poor Captain Robertson, of King's Own Scottish Borderers, was badly hit. We had an exciting ride across the plateau, under heavy shell-fire from the Boer guns. Then I received orders to bring up all horses at 1.30 p.m. I climbed down, and found the horses. It was mighty work bringing them up an almost impossibly steep ascent of 1,000 feet under shell-fire. One shell burst over us, but luckily only one horse was hit by a splinter. One man was stunned, but recovered sufficiently to come on. It took three

hours to get the horses up, and we reached the top at 5 p.m. Then there was more firing, with three of the Lincolns hit. I received orders to retire to camp, leaving Paterson and Lincolns on outpost. Got back at 7. It was exciting work getting down in the dark. Several horses had bullet-wounds, but happily no bad effect. Captain Robertson, King's Own Scottish Borderers, is dying in camp. I can't tell you how I feel about it—such a splendid fellow! Turned in, dead-tired, at 9. This has been about the hardest day I have ever had. Poor Robertson died at 10 o'clock; he was just conscious enough to hear letters from home read to him. We are all very down about it. He had a long chat with me only twenty-four hours ago. Such is life! One never knows whose turn will come next.

Monday, July 30.—Exciting news! I hear that Prinsloo, one of the chief Orange Free Staters, has surrendered to Hunter, with 6,000 men, on our right; also that our battery (H.A.C. and C.I.V). did marvellously good work, and knocked out a Boer battery. I am awfully glad they have done so well.

Reveille 5.30. Sent out flags of truce to inform our opponents under Grobler and Olivier, and to ask them to surrender. All stood by, ready to march off. This was at 8.30 a.m. My Commanding Officer, Colonel Cholmondeley, went with one flag to one commando, and Captain Marshall, of the Maltas, went with another.

Captain Robertson was buried this morning at 7, just in his blankets and a Union Jack. We stood by all day. The flags came back to-night. Olivier, a Cape Colony rebel, won't surrender; he commands a lot of scallywags; the other men will probably reply to-morrow at 8.30. Returned to camp and had dinner. Turned in at 9. By the way, I dined with our C.I.V. M.I. to-night. They also were in action yesterday, and had two casualties, only slight.

Tuesday, July 31.—Reveille at 6.30; orders to march

7.30. All the officers had flags of truce. Proceeded east-south-east towards Harrismith. The terms of surrender were as follows: Every man to return to his farm after giving up arms and ammunition, also to retain one horse and saddle; also that all farms would be respected.

The whole force moved forward. Curious anomaly that, an armed force moving forward with flags of truce! We (7th Mounted Infantry) met no one. Curious orders: if fired upon, roll up white flag and go for enemy. Fifth Mounted Infantry and General Hamilton came upon three commandos, who all surrendered (1,500 men and two guns). Olivier has got off with 400 men and four guns, without ammunition; these are all the scallywags who own no farms—rebels and tag-rags. We camped within three miles of a Boer laager, in Bester Valley, near Golden Gate, and within twenty-five miles of Harrismith, at 5.30. We hear that Christian De Wet has been surrounded at Vaal River. *All over!* I think. I had dinner and turned in to write this letter. We have had more fighting these last fourteen days than during the whole six months rolled together. I almost think the Mounted Infantry must be the hardest worked branch of the service; no thanks, though, from anybody. Captain Marshall, of the Malta's, has ridden off to-night, with a flag of truce, to Olivier at Harrismith.

Wednesday, August 1.—Reveille at 6. Had orders to proceed at 7.30, and patrol country and hills to north-west and examine farms. I therefore proceeded with ten men; saw enormous veldt fires. We reached a big farm owned by a Dutchman on commando. No arms. We got eggs, butter, and poultry, then proceeded to another farm close by, the best farm I have seen as yet out here—an ostrich farm; my first experience of one. It has fine orchards, and a good house and rooms. It belonged to a Dutchman called Jacobs, also out on commando. Hidden under a bed I found 500 rounds of Martini ammunition, as well as ammuni-

tion for Mauser and Mannlicher rifles. Destroyed these. I got breakfast here for myself, and some grub for men. Returned, after searching country, and got back at 1.30. Met no Boers. In the afternoon went over to Boer laager: a wonderful sight—between 1,500 and 3,000 men and horses. All seemed as cheery as possible, and all very sick of the war and wanted to give in. One of the guns we took is one of U Battery R.H.A. We also secured a whole convoy of ammunition. Returned to camp for dinner. Boers surrendering all day long. I had an accident to-day on patrol—stuck a knife in my hand and cut an artery. Luckily the sergeant with me had been through a course of first-aid, bound my wrist up, and stopped the bleeding. Never saw blood spurt out like it did; however, when I got back to camp, the doctor bound it up, and it is all right now. I had a jolly dinner with Major Welch, Ferrars, and Morris, also had a rum issue served out, and turned in at 9.

Thursday, August 2.—Reveille at 6. No orders to-day. Spent quiet morning in camp. We are in a huge, deep valley, with mountains and hills all round us. The whole valley is black, as all the grass is burnt, whilst all along the sides of the ridges the still smouldering turf is sending up smoke reddened by the sun, and every now and again one sees a huge column of smoke shoot up, followed by a mighty explosion (Boer ammunition being destroyed)—in fact, it exactly suggests the nether regions. The weather is warmer as spring advances; the nights are still cold, but the days are hot. General Hunter, who has worked all these operations, has done splendidly. I cannot help saying, and so does everybody else, that the Mounted Infantry have had a large share in the success; they have certainly worked hard enough. Received orders to move at 2 p.m.

By the way, we got a lot of remounts from the Boers, and very good horses. I have another fine grey pony —a real ripper; I have named him Prinsloo. I have

two fine greys now — Pretorius, who is very fit, considering the hard work he has done, and Prinsloo. Between 100 and 150 Boers came in to-day with flags of truce and surrendered.

Left flank guard to-day. Moved off east-south-east towards Harrismith. Marched six miles and met Macdonald's force. All camped here. Huge veldt fires. Everybody in camp turned out to put them out. It was extraordinary to see from 1,500 to 2,000 men rush out suddenly with their blankets and slog away at a veldt fire. Veldt fires at night are a marvellous sight, as all the ridges are lined with fire, and above it all is a huge crimson column of smoke.

I am awfully glad our battery have been in action, and have done so well; every branch of the C.I.V. have distinguished themselves now. I don't know if I mentioned it, but our C.I.V. M.I. were in action about two days ago, and had two slight casualties. I hear that Lord Roberts wants reinforcements up at Pretoria, also that our battalion have moved down from Heilbron. Several Boers sent home to their farms to-night, all very glad it is over.

Friday, August 3.—All under command of General Macdonald; had reveille at 5, and moved off at 6 a.m. A bitterly cold morning, a heavy frost. Seventh Mounted Infantry advanced guard. No enemy, so moved in close formation. Four companies of Yeomanry have joined us. It was a brilliant, fine morning. We marched east-north-east on the Harrismith road; the country was not so hilly. We left the mountains south-west of us. There were some big veldt fires. Marched about twelve miles and halted, and camped about fourteen miles west of Harrismith at 1 p.m. I am orderly officer to-day, so have plenty to do—wood-fatigues, watering horses, etc.

Olivier and his commando are at Vrede; we shall probably make for there. The Highland Brigade is going to Pretoria, as General Roberts wants reinforcements. We may probably go as well. I shall try hard

to remain with the 7th Mounted Infantry, as they see all the fighting there is to be had. I don't know, though, whether I shall get permission from Colonel Cholmondeley.

As I had very limited time to write a description of the four days' fighting round Naauwpoort Nek in the mountains, I will just say briefly what happened: General Hunter, with his force, was six miles south of us, and on our right, and he successfully compelled Prinsloo and 3,000 men to surrender at Fouriesburg.

Our force, under Generals Macdonald and Bruce Hamilton, had four days' stiff fighting, driving the Boers from hill to hill in an east-south-east direction, and compelling 2,000 of them to surrender on the last position, before reaching open country again. Our halts were chiefly made in those four days' hard work near farms, where the men got plenty to eat by roasting poultry, etc., and where the horses got plenty of fodder. I should estimate our casualties at 150, and the Boer casualties about 200. They suffered pretty heavily. Olivier, four guns, and between 250 and 300 men, Steyn, 500 men, Christian De Wet and 1,500 men are still at large. De Wet is reported to be surrounded at the Vaal River.

Ferrar, of the Welsh Regiment, has been out here nine months, and has seen any amount of fighting.

Saturday, August 4.—Still under General Macdonald, Bruce Hamilton remaining at last camp with Twenty-first Brigade and C.I.V. M.I. Reveille at 4.55; marched off east towards Harrismith at 6 o'clock; a bitterly cold morning, the water frozen solid. No enemy, so marched in close formation, we and the Yeomanry at the head of the column. Reached our camp, about four and a half miles west of Harrismith, halted and lunched. At 2 o'clock I rode into Harrismith with my servant to buy stores. Harrismith is a fine little town, situated at the foot of a huge ridge of hills. It has about 2,000 inhabitants, mostly English and Scotch. General Macdonald marched in with the Highland

Brigade and the 82nd Battery artillery, leaving the Mounted Infantry, who have done all the hard work, and been his eyes and ears, outside. The place is nearly denuded of stores, as no trains have been there for ten months, and the Boers have very nearly cleared out everything. I got together as many useful things as I could, and returned to camp at dusk—6 o'clock.

Sunday, August 5.—Remained in camp to-day—a welcome rest. Had a tub, quite a luxury. The mails go at 2 o'clock, so I will finish this letter now. Our movements will be uncertain; we may probably go to Standerton, or, more likely, back to Bethlehem and Pretoria. General Rundle is expected to-morrow, and he will probably remain here. We expect that the war is nearly over, as hundreds of Boers come in every day and give up their arms. Christian de Wet is surrounded, and we should by now have rounded up Louis Botha. C.I.V. M.I. have gone up and joined force against Louis Botha at Lydenburg, under Wilson.

Harrismith, Sunday, August 5.

This afternoon Ferrars and I rode into Harrismith to get one or two things, and met some delightful Scotch people named Parker, who asked us to have tea with them.

Two squadrons arrived here to-night from Ladysmith of 13th Hussars and 5th Lancers. They came right through in twenty-four hours. I got back to camp at 6.

Monday, August 6.—Reveille at 6; marched off for Bethlehem at 7.30. As we moved out the Rundle Division moved in. Our force consists of a brigade of Yeomanry, under Colonel Burn; 7th Mounted Infantry, Major Welch; Burmah, Captain Copeman; under Colonel Bainbridge.

The Highland Brigade are a day's march ahead of us, all under General Macdonald.

A cold day and very windy. Marched to Eland's

River. Crossed the bridge, which is a very fine one, and camped on the other side. Marched about twelve miles and reached camp at 1 p.m. Went out to forage, and whilst doing so at a farm General Macdonald came up and made this his headquarters; he had a chat with me, and asked how all the C.I.V.'s were getting along. Got eggs, poultry, and potatoes from the farm and returned to camp at 3.30.

Tuesday, August 7.—Reveille at 5.15; marched off at 6.30, due west on Bethlehem-Harrismith road. Had a small rear-guard composed of my company under Morris, I and my section being rear-guard scouts. A bitterly cold wind was blowing, but there was brilliant sunshine. The country to south-west, with the mountains of Basutoland, was very beautiful. We had a long march to-day to Tigerkloof Spruit, close to Bethlehem. The Harrismith Railway, which is in course of construction, is between eighteen and nineteen miles long. Owing to broken waggons we did not get into camp till 3.30 p.m. The Yeomanry cast a lot of horses to-day. Poor beasts, I had to shoot four to put them out of their misery! After that I walked round some farms with Ferrars to forage, but we only succeeded in getting some cut straw. At one farm there was a worthy Boer frau of enormous proportions, who ruled all the household, husband and all. When Ferrars and I arrived she stood in the doorway with arms akimbo. But she was a very cheery, motherly old lady, and reminded me of Tante Coetze in 'Jess.' I had a long chat with her, and by no means an uninteresting one.

Wednesday, August 8.—Reveille at 5.30; moved off towards Bethlehem at 7. Again it was a very cold morning. On our left flank we saw all the hills and mountains we had been fighting in for the past three weeks, also our old friends Big and Little Spitzkop. We were advanced guard to-day. No enemy, so we marched in close formation. Reached Bethlehem at 2 p.m., after having marched about sixteen miles, and

camped on southern side. The only garrison here is composed of four companies Bedford Regiment and two guns. Much has happened since we left here three weeks ago. All the Boers except Olivier have surrendered, after the stiffest fighting I have had out here, and 7th Mounted Infantry have had more of it than any of the other troops engaged. General Hunter, who conducted all the operations, has done the whole thing splendidly.

The latest news is that De la Rey and his commando went for Smith-Dorrien and his force and demanded his surrender on the lines of communication. Whilst Smith-Dorrien was considering the matter the Boers fired upon him, so he went for them and utterly routed them. The C.I.V. battalion, who were with him, did splendidly. I was naturally very glad about this. Christian de Wet is still at large. There may be plenty of fighting yet.

I went with Ferrars into Bethlehem to get one or two things, but could not succeed, everything being sold out. Returned to camp.

Thursday, August 9.—To-day I have been six months at the front. No orders, so we remain in camp here. It is a frosty morning, but there is bright sunshine, and it is sure to be hot later on. The Twenty-first Brigade, with the C.I.V. M.I., have gone on to Winburg with the prisoners. In all probability we go to Kroonstad. I spent a quiet morning in camp. In the afternoon I went with Ferrars to Bethlehem foraging. We could get nothing except two pots of jam from a German named Von Seidel, who had married an Englishwoman.

Friday, August 10.—Reveille at 5; started at 6.30 for Lindley. To-day we are left flank guard to the main column. We had an uneventful if lengthy march of eighteen miles, and reached camp (Stinkfontein) at 4 o'clock. It is the place we camped at before when we met Broadwood's flying column. We had dinner at 6, and I turned in at 8.30, rather tired.

Saturday, August 11.—Reveille at 5.30; marched at 6.45 as left flank guard. To-day's march was remarkable for a hurricane. It started to blow at 8 o'clock. The sky was a clear blue, but it did blow! We could scarcely sit on our horses; it was bitterly cold, too, and there were enormous clouds of dust. I never imagined such a wind-storm—a new experience. We passed an old camp, and the empty tins strewn about were blown here and there like straw. After a long weary march of fifteen miles we reached Lindley at 3.30. Lindley is absolutely deserted except for two stores, which still keep open. This place really looks like war—houses demolished and dead horses lying in the streets, besides broken-up furniture and waggons.

Sunday, August 12.—Reveille at 6. Received orders to stand by. I hear that De Wet has again escaped from Methuen at the Vaal River, and is marching south; also that Olivier is marching on Bethlehem, and that there is a commando of some 400 to 500 close by here under Ashbruch. All sorts of rumours are afloat as to our destination. At last the orders have come for the whole force to march to Kroonstad. Started at 9.30. I think I have already mentioned in what a broken country Lindley lies. I believe there has been more fighting in this place than any other. Well, the column moved out west of Lindley. The 7th Mounted Infantry were rearguard to the main column on the left flank. I and my section occupied a high kopje south-west of Lindley for two hours, till the main column had left. We saw a few Boer scouts on horizon north-east of us. At 11.30 we moved to another high kopje four miles west, known as Yeomanry Hill. Here we waited again for two hours. This is the hill where 350 of the Imperial Yeomanry under Colonel Spragge surrendered, after being surrounded for five days and being starved out. Had they held out for another twenty-four hours Methuen's column would have relieved them.

A terrible sight awaited us on this hill. We found three poor fellows unburied and several others only

partially buried. One of them Ferrars identified by a ring. He was a man from Belfast, called Blomfield. We did all we could for them—buried them all, and put stones over them, and a cross of stones at their head. The southern, or steep side of the hill, was covered with discharged cartridge-cases. Down below in the valley were between eighty and one hundred dead horses. The men had all made a good fight for it. It was very sad and very terrible.

At 1.30 we got orders to move into camp, about three miles off.

Monday, August 13.—Reveille at 6. To-day we were rear-guard to the ox convoy—*i.e.*, rear-guard to the whole column. Instead of going to Kroonstad the column had orders to move on to Heilbron, to intercept Olivier and his commando. Morris went off with a small column of details to Kroonstad to get stores and clothing for us. We did not march off till 11.30, being rear-guard, a very long column with the ox convoy. We saw a few Boer scouts and had a bit of sniping; no serious attack, however. We passed an Englishman's farm; the daughter was shot dead during an action six weeks ago. I shot a guinea-fowl with my revolver for our mess; got him at 30 yards. We crossed Rhenoster River at 4 p.m., and saw the camp on the other side. We got into camp at 6.

Tuesday, August 14.—Reveille at 5; moved off at 6.15 as part of the main column advanced guard in front of infantry, Yeomanry to-day being advanced guard and scouts. Every man was ordered to take 200 rounds of ammunition, as fighting was expected.

Our right front was a succession of ridges. At 9.30 we heard a great deal of sniping on our right. The advanced guard halted. The whole of the 7th Mounted Infantry and the Burmahs had orders to go out and extend and reconnoitre the long ridge east and on right flank. All accordingly moved out; but we had barely got out of our cover and moved across the plain when we came in for a terrific shelling from eight guns posted

all along the ridge. Ferrars and I had orders to gallop forward and occupy a kopje about 1,000 yards east. We galloped forward and occupied the kopje, getting well ahead all the way. Luckily, only one horse was killed. The remainder of 7th Mounted Infantry proceeded to occupy a ridge to our right, south-east of us. We were shelled all the time, but we are accustomed to it now: see a puff of white smoke, wait ten seconds, hear report, then shell arrives and bursts—bang! Then comes a shower of stones and dirt. We waited here one hour. The Highland Brigade on the right started to take the big ridge. The Boer guns moved further south-south-east along the continuation of the ridge. The 7th Mounted Infantry got orders to gallop right to the south-east and prevent the infantry advance from being enfiladed. So we all galloped out in extended order, and came in for a terrific shelling. Several horses were hit as well as three of the Lincolns. After going for half an hour's most exciting ride we reached a ridge. All dismounted and took up a position facing another ridge 2,500 yards off, held by Boers. This was at 2 p.m. We started firing at them, and came in for a heavy Mauser fire. Our artillery had taken up a position behind us and the infantry, and there were shelling the Boer guns, but they were not very effective. The Boer front was about five miles. To our dismay one solitary Boer gun opened fire on us on our left at 4,000 yards. We were powerless, as we had to keep the Boers in front of us held, and we could not move. This blessed gun shelled us every five minutes till 5 o'clock. We all got well extended and took the best cover we could get. Only one man was hit—one of my men, Cousens of the Hampshires, hit through the neck by a bullet. The man who had his horse killed was riding my second horse. At 5.30 the firing ceased, and we had orders to retire to the ridge which the Boers had first held, and which was taken by our infantry. Here I and Roberts (a subaltern in the Norfolks) got orders to report ourselves to General Macdonald. We did so. We got orders

from his A.D.C. (Captain Wigan, of the Warwicks) to go to Spitzkop, about four miles off, and find out officer commanding Highland Light Infantry; also if this Spitzkop was taken by them. Roberts was to go then to General Hunter for orders for the Highland Light Infantry, whether to retire or not. I was to return to General Macdonald and say where Highland Light Infantry were. Well, it was getting dark when we started. We galloped over the plain to the long kopje. It was pitch-dark, except for veldt fires. We rode over the long kopje, passing several wounded Highland Light Infantry men and one poor chap lying with a shell wound through his neck and back, some Highland Light Infantry men being with him. None of them knew where the battalion was, however; they had taken the ridge, but apparently not little Spitzkop. They said the Colonel of the Highland Light Infantry was wounded. Well, Roberts and I rode on and looked everywhere. All was silent as the grave, after the battle. We shouted for Highland Light Infantry; no answer. Then we rode right up to Little Spitzkop, but found no trace of them. Evidently they had retired. Well, here Roberts and I parted. He went back to find the camp and General Hunter; I went back to find Wigan. I had taken the bearings of the direction I had come, so by aid of the Southern Cross I got back to the first ridge, where I had left Wigan, our guns, and our Mounted Infantry. Got back at 8. No sign of anybody anywhere! Evidently whilst I was gone all had received orders to retire to camp. I had no idea where the camp was, so I climbed up to the top of the kopje. There I could see nothing except veldt fires all round me. It was pitch-dark. I thought the best thing I could do was to strike north-east, which must certainly bring me somewhere near them. The horse and I were absolutely done; I had had nothing to eat since 5 except a biscuit. It was a bitterly cold night. I trekked till 1 o'clock up and down the kopjes. At last I thought it best to lie down and go to sleep and wait

till morning, as I did not want to walk into a Boer laager totally unarmed—no cartridges left. So I unsaddled my horse and lay down. It was, however, far too cold to sleep, so I lit a pipe and waited till dawn. At 5 o'clock I saddled up and started, luckily coming across a new spoor—wheels and hoofs, our artillery waggon marks. I followed these up, and at 6 o'clock saw our camp at Cox's Farm, Kaalfontein, four miles north-west of Little Spitzkop. I rode on, and went straight to report myself to General Macdonald. Found Colonel Bainbridge there, and very glad to see me. The General very kind. I was able to give this useful information: that from the place I had slept at I had seen no Boers this morning, and that all seemed clear. The General thought it was occupied by Boers. The place where I slept was Ventersburg. The Highland Light Infantry had retired, and so also had all others, back to the camp, four miles away from action. Roberts also slept on the veldt, but managed to get into an empty farm. Colonel Bainbridge was awfully angry that two of his officers were sent on such an errand. It was the luckiest thing in the world that I did not walk into a Boer patrol! The force is halting here till 11.30. The result of yesterday's action was not over creditable to us. We took the Boer position, it is true, but had over 100 casualties, of which the Highland Light Infantry lost sixty-seven in one of those doubtful patrol attacks; and, besides, Olivier has got away with all his guns and waggons again. The Boer strength was about 2,000 men, with ten guns and one pom-pom; ours, 4,000 men, eight guns, one pom-pom, and one 5-inch gun. By the way, I was pom-pomed yesterday for the first time. It was the hardest day I have had so far, even harder than the Golden Gate fight at Bethlehem.

Wednesday, August 15.—As written above, I reached camp safe and sound. Orders to move off to Heilbron at 11.30. Started. Seventh Mounted Infantry had orders to

move in formation of a cavalry screen and go on ahead to see if Heilbron was occupied. All quiet; no Boers about anywhere. I and my section were on extreme left flank. I reached Heilbron at 1.30, and the 7th Mounted Infantry took up a position on high ground, north-east and north-west of the town. Was called into camp at dusk (5.30). Thoroughly tired to-night.

Thursday, August 16.—No orders. Ferrars took out a patrol towards Lindley. I was orderly officer, and had to take the horses to water, and to do other necessary duties. At 10.30 7th Mounted Infantry received orders to move to Gotenburg, halfway on the railway line between Heilbron and Wolvehoek, and guard line. Luckily the line was intact and the two bridges unbroken. Our little force consisted of 7th Mounted Infantry (Major Welch), Burmah Mounted Infantry (Captain Copeman), one 15-pound gun, and one pom-pom, under Colonel Bainbridge. Proceeded at 1.30, and reached Gotenburg at 5.30. We took one day's rations with us. Captain Lloyd and the Lincoln Company 7th Mounted Infantry go on another three miles with three days' rations. The country here is as flat as a billiard-table. Far away on the south-west the kopjes can be seen which marked our advance with Tucker's Division up to Pretoria. To the north-east tower the high ridges on the other side of the Vaal, close to Johannesburg. The days are longer: the sun rises 6.15 and sets 5.30. The nights are cold, but the days are getting very hot. There is nearly always brilliant sunshine, and we have had no rain since July 20.

Friday, August 17.—Reveille at 6. I had orders to take out an officer's patrol at 6 in a westerly direction, and to take up an observation post. I had breakfast at 5.30 and started at 6. All was quiet. I received orders to return. All started back for Heilbron at 1.30, and reached here at 4.30. I understand that we remain here for a week or so to refit and get fresh horses. Morris is bringing up fresh clothing for the 7th Mounted Infantry. I received a telegram from him

this evening. This move is very necessary, as the men are literally in rags.

Saturday, August 18.—A quiet day in camp to-day; only the usual duties. The camp is very unhealthy, as so many dead carcasses are about, and they make one conscious of their presence on hot days. Had welcome tub and general clean up, and in the afternoon went with Ferrars to the town to try and buy a few necessaries. We went to the hospital and saw our wounded men. As we reached there a funeral came out; it was that of a poor Highland Light Infantry fellow. He was escorted to his last resting-place by his company and bagpipes; it was very sad and solemn. Our men are doing well. There are several awful cases, though the saddest of all is, I think, that of a young gunner with the whole of his jaw shot away. He can't possibly live, poor chap! as he can't eat, and, what is worse, he can't say a word; nor can he write, as he has become semi-paralyzed. I heard from some 6th Mounted Infantry men in hospital with wounds (Ferrars' men) that Broadwood had an indecisive action with De Wet about a month ago, and that the 6th Mounted Infantry lost heavily. I could get nothing in the town except Boer meal; everything was sold out—in fact, the whole place is as bare as possible. I returned to camp in time for dinner, and turned in at 10. No train in yet from Wolvehoek, although one is expected every minute.

Sunday, August 19.—I don't know whether you will have received my last letter, but I enclosed a map showing or giving you an idea of the country where we had five days' continuous fighting. I hear that thirty mailbags are coming by this train, but I shall not get anything for some time, as all letters will go to the C.I.V. M.I., who are all over the country. Their whereabouts are, I believe, as follows: No. 1 Company at Pretoria; No. 2 Company at Winburg. But lots of men are all over the country as police, orderlies, sick, etc. I hope to see the C.I.V. M.I. soon again. I have now a good section of Tommies, all excellent soldiers;

half of them are reserve men called up for the war. Major Welch (my Commanding Officer) is a first-rate soldier; I would go under him anywhere. Ferrars and Morris. too, are real good fellows. The Colonel is Bainbridge, of Egyptian fame—I believe the youngest Colonel in the army; you may have heard of him.

I suppose you know that there is no regiment of regular Mounted Infantry, but that each foot battalion supplies one company or two which have had Mounted Infantry training at Aldershot. All these companies have been collected together out here, and are divided into corps and Mounted Infantry. There are eight corps, and ours is the 7th, composed of one company each of Lincolns, Norfolks, Hampshires, King's Own Scottish Borderers, and Maltas, under Major Welch.

Ventersburg.

Sunday and Monday, August 19, 20.—Two uneventful days spent in camp at Heilbron.

Tuesday, August 21.—Received orders to march to Kroonstad at 2.30. Our force was: 400 Yeomanry, Colonel Burn; 7th Mounted Infantry, Major Welch; Burmah Mounted Infantry, Captain Copeman (under Colonel Bainbridge); and about 200 empty ox convoy. Marched six miles and reached camp at 5.30.

Wednesday, August 22.—Continued our march; a dull, undulating country, but brilliantly fine weather. Reached camp near Paarde Kraal, after having done eighteen miles. No enemy; all quiet.

Thursday, August 23.—Continuation of march to within eight miles of Kroonstad. Nothing worth writing.

Friday, August 24.—Started at 7. Brilliant crimson sunrise. At 8 a cold wind sprang up, and the sky got covered with clouds. Then we came in for cold, driving snow and rain. Yesterday we had tropical heat; marvellous change! It cleared up when we got near Kroonstad at 11. We camped close to the town, and east of it.

Major Welch asked me if I would draw clothing, ammunition, horse-kit, and all field articles for the 7th Mounted Infantry corps. I set about this at once, got a buck waggon, proceeded to the ordnance stores close to the railway-station, and drew as much as the waggon would carry. Did not get back till dinner-time.

Saturday, August 25.—Got up early and ordered another waggon, then proceeded to ordnance stores to get the remainder of stores, blankets, rifle-oil, medical stores, dubbin, etc. I had to wait for a long time, so I went into Kroonstad to find Captain Carmielli (in command of our Brigade transport), in order to get some 280 nosebags out of him. I went all over Kroonstad, but could not find him. I hear we are all moving with Cape-cart transport (two-wheeled buggy), and leaving heavy waggons behind.

Sunday, August 26.—Got orders to move at 8, with 300 Cape-carts as transport. Had to leave some of my kit in store here; don't suppose I shall see it again.

We go after Olivier, part of a big movement all round. Force: Burmah Mounted Infantry, Captain Copeman; 7th Mounted Infantry, Major Welch; 8th Mounted Infantry, Colonel Ross (all under Colonel Bainbridge).

Four hundred Yeomanry have been sent by train to Winburg under Colonel Burn. We proceeded southwards towards Winburg. I had command of the extreme left flank scouts. We went twelve miles, then halted and camped at Rietspruit. No enemy in sight; all clear.

Monday, August 27.—Left at 5, and marched to Ventersburg (about fourteen miles). Reached there at 2 o'clock. Commanded left flank scouts—*i.e.*, outside left flank guard. Hear Olivier and his three sons and twenty-five Boers have been captured by Captain Smythe, 5th Mounted Infantry. Haasbruck, his fighting man, is, however, still at large with 1,000 men and six guns. Bruce Hamilton is close by, probably at Ventersburg Road Station, six miles west

of Ventersburg. It is a fine hot day. I got some fowls and six dozen eggs for our mess at two Kaffir kraals. Oh, by the way, Ferrar left us at Kroonstad. He is under Broadwood. We hear De Wet is coming south.

Tuesday, August 28.—Marched at 6. To-day we are advanced guard. We went as far as *Z*and River. The country is very hilly and broken up. Saw no enemy; all clear. I hear that Major Welch received orders to reconnoitre east of *Z*and River, and then return to Ventersburg to camp. I was extreme left flank. All clear; no vestige of Boers. After a long march round of between thirty and forty miles we reached camp one mile west of Ventersburg at 8 o'clock, both horses and men dead-tired. Two of my men had to leave their horses. Luckily I was able to catch two other ponies on the veldt. The Kaffirs told me that Haasbruck has trekked south towards Wepener. Had a welcome dinner, and turned in at 9. But it was impossible to sleep. There was a terrific thunderstorm, and it rained like blazes, with vivid and continuous lightning from 11 till 3 o'clock.

Wednesday, August 29.—No orders; remained in camp. Very glad, as it literally poured with rain all day without cessation. Everything is rather damp, and I had no dinner in the evening, as it kept on raining hard, with terrific thunderstorms. Turned in at 8. At 11 o'clock I was very fortunately awake, for a regular hurricane sprang up and struck our tent. I jumped up, lit my lamp, got outside, and called a servant. Together we managed to hold the tent down and fasten the pegs with ammunition-boxes. I shall never forget it; it took us an hour and a half. It was a truly terrific hurricane, with sheets of rain, pitch-dark, and every five or ten seconds vivid lightning. Marvellous! All the other tents were blown down and flying about; luckily ours stood fast. It was very exciting. I turned in again at 1, but could not sleep. The rain stopped about 3, but the wind kept up. Major Welch and

Morris sat on the tent inside. To give you an idea of what the night was like would be impossible; it beats anything I have ever imagined.

Thursday, August 30.—A fine morning after the storm; still somewhat gusty and threatening. We had a welcome breakfast at 7, and at 8.30 shifted camp. Several horses are lost. The men, too, had a bad night. We have orders to move to Ventersburg Road Station at 1 o'clock. Had some lunch, and started, reaching Ventersburg Road Station at 5.30 p.m. Camped here.

We hear that about 5,000 Boers are advancing on Bloemfontein. We go south—in all probability to Bloemfontein—by train.

I don't think the end of the war is far off. Buller and Roberts have defeated Botha at Machadodorp, and driven him out. De Wet—a marvellous chap—and 1,000 men, also Haasbruck, 1,000 men, and a few odd commandos are still to be rounded up. I think September will see the finish. C.I.V. battalion, Mounted Infantry and battery, are all mobilizing at Pretoria. This may either be preparatory to an advance, or most likely getting ready to go home. Am fit and well.

Bloemfontein Club, September 2, 1900.

Friday, August 31*st*.—No orders to move. Went over to station to hear latest news. De Wet still coming south. I bought a few stores. At 5 o'clock we had orders to shift camp and get ready to train south; the Yeomanry had already gone. We marched off about 6 to railway-line. At 11 o'clock we had sudden orders to train south at once, so I got up and saw my men saddled up. We left at 12 o'clock, taking Cape-carts with us, and waited at the station till 3 a.m. before the train came in. The Malta Company had already left. From 3 till 6.30 all were busy training horses and with the carts and saddlery. I was in command of one half of the Hampshire Company. All

our horses and Morris follow to-morrow. It is rather hard work. We left at 7, all loaded up in cattle-trucks. The weather was beautifully fine. We passed through the country of our advance under Tucker, which was very interesting; we also passed Zand River and Vet River, coming across some really marvellous new and hasty bridges built by the Royal Engineers, the permanent way being quite 200 to 300 feet above the river level.

Brandfort, Karee, and Roodeheuvel Farm brought back many pleasant experiences of old fights and skirmishes. We arrived at Bloemfontein at 1.30, and found that the Burmah Company have already gone to Thaba 'Nchu with Bruce Hamilton's force. I hear that Boers under Haasbruck and another (about 3,000 men and four guns) have re-occupied Thaba 'Nchu, having forced four companies of militia to evacuate it.

Unloaded our train, watered and fed horses. Meanwhile, I rushed round for remounts, and got some new horses for the corps. Major Welch and remainder of 7th Mounted Infantry came in at 4 p.m. in the third train, with the Cape-carts and the rest of the men. All moved off to camp east of Bloemfontein, and we all dined at the club here in the evening. At 8 p.m. an orderly brought me the following wire:

To Officer Commanding 7th Mounted Infantry.

Inform Lieutenant B. Moeller that he is required to rejoin at once at Pretoria.

Sunday, September 2.—Bloemfontein is really much improved. Electric light is installed, as well as better drainage, and the whole place looks cleaned up.

Spring has fairly started, and it is very refreshing to the eye to see the fresh green and the blossoms coming out. It is getting hotter every day. I turned out early, and made all preparations to leave and rejoin C.I.V. M.I. at Pretoria. Went to C.S.O. and got my

pass up to Pretoria. The train goes at 5.40 p.m. Said good-bye to Major Welch and Colonel Bainbridge; both kindly said they were very sorry to lose me. I am very sorry, in a way, to go, for I have had a nailing good time with the 7th Mounted Infantry, seeing lots of fighting and soldiering. I have also made great friends with the officers.

Monday, September 3.—Still here. There is a train up north to-night at 1.15 a.m., and I am looking after my last saddlery and saddle-bags. General Hunter is here, and there is a general big movement to round and collar Haasbruck and his 2,000 men between Thaba 'Nchu and Dewetsdorp.

Umbana, eleven miles east-north-east of Newcastle, Natal, September 15, 1900.

I wrote last from Bloemfontein on Sunday, Septemtember 2. On Tuesday, September 4, I left for Pretoria at 7.30 a.m. to rejoin C.I.V. M.I. Arrived at Ventersburg Road at dusk. Here the train stopped for the night, for so many trains have been burnt and held up recently that no trains run after sunset and before sunrise.

Wednesday, September 5.—Left at 6.30 a.m. Reached Kroonstad at 10. Took four other C.I.V. M.I. men with me to Pretoria. Left at 1.30. Reached Viljoen's Drift, this side of Vaal River, at 5.45, and halted here for the night. We passed remains of the burnt-up trains. I had a scratch dinner at a house here, where there was a very cross-grained old Dutch woman, who would not do anything at first; however, after much persuasion—gentle, but firm—she condescended to give us some coffee and meat.

Thursday, September 6.—Left at 5.30 a.m. Passed several burnt-up trains, and saw Roodeval, where the 4th Derbys were cut up. Reached Elandsfontein at 12 and Pretoria at 3.30.

We found Pretoria garrisoned by C.I.V., and

Mounted Infantry camped four miles west of the town. A battery further north with Paget.

Colonel Cholmondeley glad to see me. All No. 1 Company are here; no horses, however. Concannon and most of the No. 2 Company have gone up north to Lydenburg with all fit horses. Tommy Wilson is here, also Wellby. I was very glad to see them. Wellby is awfully cut up about the death of his brother, and has applied to go home. His brother was a distinguished soldier. I believe most people know about him.

Friday, September 7.—I rode over this morning and saw Colonel Mackinnon, who informed me that I had been selected by Lord Roberts for the honour of a commission. The military secretary informed me I was gazetted for the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own).

September 8 and 9.—Nothing of consequence, except on Monday, September 10, I got orders from the military secretary to join the regiment as soon as possible, and that the regiment was at Newcastle, in Natal. I returned to camp and had a final dinner with all my comrades. Very sorry to leave them.

PART IV

WITH THE MOUNTED INFANTRY COMPANY OF THE MIDDLESEX REGIMENT ATTACHED TO 14TH MOUNTED INFANTRY.

Tuesday, September 11.—Left Pretoria at 12.30; reached Elandsfontein at 4. No train to-night.

Wednesday, September 12.—Started at 9.20 for Newcastle in Durban train. Proceeded viâ Heidelberg, and halted for the night at Standerton. Slept the night in Standerton in train.

Thursday, September 13.—Standerton lies in a valley surrounded by high kopjes; it is about the size of Heidelberg. There are plenty of troops here. The railway journey through Ingogo, Laing's Nek, and Majuba Hill was most intensely interesting, historical as it has become through past fights both with the Boers and the Zulus. It is a mighty country, with its deep gorges, river beds, with the huge towering ridges running from 1,500 to 4,000 feet high. The three highest peaks are Majuba, Mount Prospect, and another. The railway curves in and out, following the watercourses, and drops some 3,000 feet gradually from Standerton to Newcastle. The gradient is very steep, and varies from 1 in 80 to 1 in 120. It is built in a very ingenious way, too, with reversing stations.

I don't think I have ever seen grander country anywhere. The thought occurred to me: how awful it must have been for our soldiers in 1881, who at that time were dressed in scarlet tunics and white pith helmets—a

distinct mark for every Boer—in their attempt to take Majuba! It is a mighty hill, and would take between two and three hours to climb just walking up it. Well, we reached Newcastle at 3.30, and I joined my new regiment, and feel as if I had started on a fresh lease of life. A word about Newcastle. It is a nice little English town of some 4,000 inhabitants, lying in the valley, with the hills overlooking it from the north to north-west, while far away are the mighty mountains of the Drakensberg. It is very hot here. I reported myself to the Adjutant, and was introduced to my new Colonel (Colonel Hill). At dinner I saw some of the others. All very cordial. The Colonel asked me a few questions about my service, etc. At 9 o'clock the Adjutant informed me that I was posted to G Company at Umbana, under Captain Eustace, and that I was to proceed to-morrow with the rations.

Friday, September 14.—Turned out at 6. At 9 went into Newcastle and bought some clothes and boots and a few necessaries. I left Newcastle at 1, and started with our ox-waggon of rations for Umbana. It was blazing hot. Umbana is a high kopje ten miles east-north-east of Newcastle, and commands a good deal of country. The Middlesex, under Colonel Hill, are close by F Company and a squadron of the 13th Hussars; the whole are under Major Close, of 13th Hussars. After a long tramp we reached our camp on the top of the hill at 4 o'clock. No Boers are here, apparently, except a few stray parties still in the hills. General Hildyard occupies Utrecht, some ten miles east of us; Colonel Burn-Murdoch commands troops in Newcastle.

Saturday, September 15.—Got up at 6, and had a walk round to see if I could shoot a wildebeeste or paauw, before breakfast; but I saw nothing, except two buck, miles away. Game is very scarce. This was otherwise a quiet day in camp, barring the usual duties, examining rifles, observation posts, etc. Captain Eustace has handed over all the work to me. It was so hot

that I sat in the shade from 1 till 3. But there is exquisite scenery, with beautiful sunsets and sunrises.

Monday, September 17.—Turned out at 6. Went out to look for some game, but only saw two wildebeeste. Could not get anywhere near them! Returned to breakfast at 8, and examined rifles, etc., then went down and had my daily bathe in the Buffalo. In the afternoon a Captain Simpson, Surveyor of the Natal Rifles, came up here to take bearings with a theodolite. He brought his wife, a charming woman, and his boy also. They all had tea in our tent. Went round all our posts, and turned in at 10.

Tuesday, September 18.—An uneventful day spent in camp, doing usual camp duties. The 2nd Battalion Middlesex Regiment has done awfully well in Natal, and they have earned undying fame at Vaalkrantz, Pieter's Hill, Spion Kop, Van Wyk, Almond's Nek. Turned out at 7. A beautiful day! Had parade of company and a bathe afterwards. The Buffalo is two and a half miles off. Umbana—the hill I am on—is between 600 and 700 feet high, and rises abruptly from all sides. In the afternoon I spotted two wildebeeste in the far distance with my glass. I got my carbine and went out after them, against the wind. Got to within 1,500 yards of them and then crawled after them from ant-heap to ant-heap; but, as ill luck would have it, something startled them at 1,200 yards, and off they went! I got on their spoor, however, and to-morrow morning shall be up at 4 to have another try. Our waggon of supplies came up at 5. At 7 we had dinner, and after going round our posts, turned in at 10. I am beginning to think I shall not see any more fighting out here. But, after all, I can't complain, as I believe I have seen as much fighting as anyone. I have been in the following fights: Jacobsdal, Paardeberg, Poplar Farm, Karee, Brandfort, Zand River, Pretoria, Heidelberg, Bethlehem (five days' fighting), Naauwpoort Nek (two days' fighting), Golden Gate (three days' fighting), Cox's

Farm, Heilbron, with 7th Mounted Infantry, besides innumerable little skirmishes which don't count. The following days till end of September were spent in camp at Umbana, and were uneventful. Umbana is ten miles east-north-east from Newcastle.

September 27.—This, Sunday, was a magnificent day, so clear that from the top of our hill we could see fifty miles—a day one never sees in Europe. I made some eye-sketches of Majuba, Laing's Nek, Mount Prospect, and Pangwana.

September 29.—Captain McEwan (Adjutant) asked me if I would ride over with him to Sikafu, where Major Lemprière and 190 men are. Sikafu is the culminating point of a ridge running north-north-east of Newcastle, and nine miles away. McEwan lent me a clinking good horse, and we had a fine ride, reaching Sikafu at 3. I never imagined a hill could be so well fortified. Splendid trenches! Bomb-proof shelters. It is a very important post. Returned to camp.

October 1.—Received orders to hold myself in readiness to proceed to Fort Macready with fifty men to relieve the Imperial Light Infantry. I hear to-day that the C.I.V.'s are all going home at once.

October 2.—A change in the weather. It is cloudy and cold, with a south-east wind. Drakensberg is a wonderful sight with all the tops covered with gray clouds. I reported myself to officer commanding Infantry Details Camp, Newcastle. Took over fifty-two men, and proceeded to relieve Captain Gordon and the Imperial Light Infantry at Fort Macready. This fort is on the rising slope running east-north-east of Newcastle, and four and a half miles from the latter. I arrived at 10, and took over the fort, stores, mules, ammunition, etc. There will be plenty to do, as the fort wants repairing. It is an important post, and not bad—being my own officer commanding after two months' service in the regulars! The last time I was my own officer commanding was when I was in

charge of the escort to Cronje's mounted prisoners between Paardeberg and Modder. My men are a mixed lot, and are composed of Devons, Rifle Brigade, Gordons, Manchesters, and others.

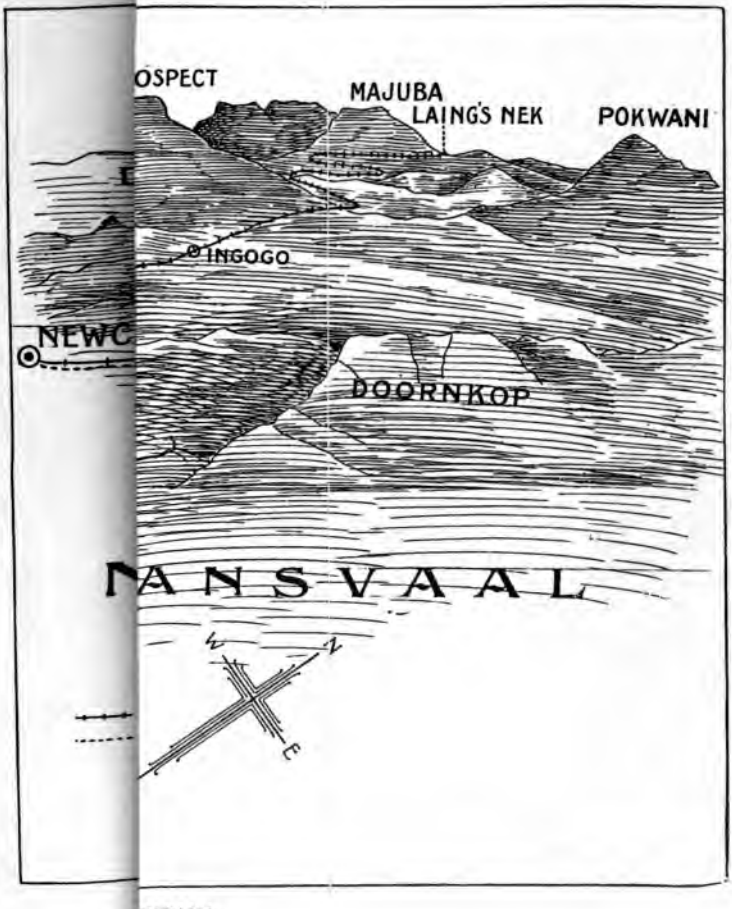
Note.—From the beginning of October till the beginning of November, Lieutenant Moeller was in command at Fort Macready, and nothing of importance occurred except usual camp duties and routine work. Macready is a fort of some importance, near Dundee, Natal.

Dundee, Natal, November 4.

I had charge of the escort for a convoy to Gregory's Nek, eight miles north-east of here. The convoy consisted of 150 waggons (supplies for the troops at Blood River), and the escort consisted of 30th Middlesex, 25th Royal Engineers, 15th Lancashire Fusiliers, and Mounted Scouts. I handed over the convoy at 2 p.m. to another escort which met us at Gregory's Nek, and started back at 4.30. The weather has been fine and hot on the whole, except some heavy thunderstorms. All the drifts here are flooded. I hear that some more Mounted Infantry is to be formed, and I have sent in an application to go back to the old work. Nothing beats Mounted Infantry work, scouting or trekking.

2nd Battalion Middlesex Regiment,
Newcastle, Natal, November 9.

Got leave off for the day. Took my carbine and some lunch with me and walked to the highest point of Indumeni (2,045 feet). I enjoyed the walk immensely. I saw no buck, but plenty of baboons —some as big as a man—as well as any amount of birds; viz., golden pheasants, plovers, partridges, and koran. There is a splendid view from the top; one can see fifty miles of country all round. It was a beautiful day. Got back at 6. To-night orders were


OSPECT
MAJUBA
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received that we return to Newcastle by route-march. Colonel Blomfield and Lancashire Fusiliers have come in from Blood River to garrison Dundee. Three companies of Middlesex Regiment came in as well from De Tagers.

November 12.—Marched off at 6.30, force consisting of four companies infantry, under Captain Eustace; two 4·7 guns, Major Guinness; one howitzer battery (86th), Major Ducrot; one field company Royal Engineers (Major Cairn); one troop Mounted Infantry; and ox convoy. I had command of G Company and was left flank guard to column. It was a fine, cold day. Stopped at Hadding Spruit (mid-day halt). Reached camp at Dannhauser at 3.30, after marching sixteen miles. In the evening all the officers dined at the local hotel.

November 13.—Turned out at 6; a brilliant, clear morning. Marched off at 9.30. To-day I was infantry advance-guard. Halted mid-day at Acton Spruit. At 2.30 started again and camped at Ingagane after marching fourteen miles. Very hot day. Had dinner in camp. Very bad water.

November 14.—Marched off at 10. To-day we were rear-guard to the whole force. It was very hot and close, and shortly after the start we came in for a heavy thunderstorm, and got wet through in five minutes. After a long, weary tramp, we reached our headquarter-camp at Newcastle at 2.30. I have received intimation from Commanding Officer that I am to hold myself in readiness for the Mounted Infantry corps now being raised at Pretoria, and to start, probably, on Sunday next. The corps will be commanded by Colonel Henry—an old friend of mine from Karee, and a first-rate soldier. Mighty glad am I to get away from headquarters and to be once again in the Mounted Infantry, on the trek and guerilla fighting. So poor Gallais is dead! You know I was under him for some time during the war. He was a fine fellow, and a brilliant cavalry officer. Dead in the prime of

life, and almost at the start of a promising career! However, such are the fortunes of war.

November 17.—Turned out at 5. Eustace and G Company had orders in the night to proceed to Umbana at daybreak. I saw them off, and said good-bye to my old skipper. Very sorry, as he is a real good fellow! To-day I have been appointed in command of the Middlesex Mounted Infantry detachment of fifty men, and my subaltern will be Hilton from Roberts' Horse. This is very satisfactory. Orders are to leave here Monday, 19th instant, at 9 a.m., entrain for Volksrust and report there to Colonel Henry; on the 20th to go to Pretoria and mobilize.

November 18.—Turned out at 6. Church parade of whole garrison at 7.30. I have just heard that, as the line is broken up, we do not leave to-morrow, but probably Tuesday. When here, with headquarters, I have always to remain in camp till 1 o'clock. After lunch I went for a ride with Willoughby (one of the subs.). A lovely afternoon. Rode over to hills north-west of here, and returned to dinner. There is very strict discipline in this regiment, stricter than any other I have yet seen. Turned in at 11.

November 19.—Yesterday I heard that Major Welch, of the Hampshires, was dangerously wounded in Le Gallais' fight at Bothaville. This morning I see he has died from his wounds.

You will, no doubt, remember he was Commanding Officer of the 7th Regiment Mounted Infantry, and asked me in August to join him. For two months I lived with him, Morris and Ferrars; we always had our meals together. He was very good to me; in fact, he was a good friend. I am awfully sorry, and it is hard to believe I shall never see him again. Reflecting on the whole war, the best time I have had so far was under Major Welch. He was a man of about 5 feet 6 inches, thin, wiry, and as hard as nails; a fine rider, good sportsman, a splendid Mounted Infantry soldier, and only about thirty-five years old. He had

such kindly grey eyes! Always watchful and intrepid, he was a typical Mounted Infantry officer in the real sense of the word. I feel very sad about it. I have, indeed, lost a friend in the service. Such is life: here to-day, gone to-morrow!

Remained in camp, usual duties, etc. Went over to sappers' mess and said good-bye to Lloyd Owen, McKechnie, and Plaice, who are all off to-day; they are three of the nicest fellows I have met out here.

November 20.—Turned out at 6. After breakfast started drilling the company in Mounted Infantry work. Also took them over to artillery and gave them an hour's riding.

November 22.—Turned out at 6. Had my company out for Mounted Infantry drill from 9.30 to 11.30. Heavy thunderstorm.

November 23.—Turned out at 5.30. Afterwards I gave my men two hours' riding, drill, and stables.

To-day I received orders to start to-morrow for Pretoria. My company consists of one subaltern (Hilton) and fifty men. I am to pick up twenty-six men of the York and Lancaster, and twenty-four men from Dorsets (all for Mounted Infantry) at Volksrust, and then proceed with the whole batch to Pretoria. Terrific storm—several of our tents blown down. Received orders at 11 o'clock that we were to move at 5 a.m.

November 24.—After a wet night we turned out at 4 a.m. I marched off with my company at 5.45. Entrained at 7, started 7.30. Fine morning. Picked up seventeen York and Lancasters, and twenty-five Dorsets at Volksrust. Here we changed trains, and got tacked on to the mail; the men got on trucks. Reached Standerton at 6, got tea for men. Had dinner at 6.30. Slept in the railway carriage.

November 25.—Turned out at 5.30. Train left at 6. Breakfasted at Heidelberg, and got tea for the men. Had three most interesting passengers with us—Trevor (on intelligence staff; he was with Baden-Powell all

through Mafeking), Lockston (guide to Buller), and Struben (one of Lord Roberts' guides). Had a long talk with these. Reached Elandsfontein at 2.30. All detrained here. Found we could get no train for Pretoria till 5 next morning. A beautiful day. I am once more on old familiar ground.

November 26.—Turned out at 4. Train left at 5; reached Pretoria at 8. Everything looks beautifully green after recent long rains. Started off for Mounted Infantry depot, just west of racecourse, at 9.30; reached camp at 10.30, and reported to Major Handcock in charge here. Got the men put in tents. There are a good many different detachments here. I am personally in command of a company of ninety-two men, viz.: fifty Middlesex, seventeen York and Lancasters, and twenty-five Dorsets. Had dinner at 7, and turned in at 11. Very jolly fellows in mess, but the food is very bad.

Ferrars (my old friend, who was attached with me to 7th Mounted Infantry) has turned up here to-day, and I was very glad to see him. I got a good horse to-day, an English bay cob, 16 hands. On the ride back from Pretoria I saw a terrific storm coming on. Over the hills to the south-east were enormous black columns of clouds, also clouds of red and white dust. The storm struck me near the camp; I was nearly blown off my horse, the fences and trees were blown down, and stones, biscuit-tins, and wood were flying about like straw. The horse refused to face it. Ultimately, however, I reached camp, and found several tents blown away all over the place. Luckily ours was still standing. Then came a mighty rain, with thunder and lightning, a fine sight. The camp is now a lake, everything soaked through and through. Turned in, in wet blankets, at 10.

Pretoria, November 27.

Bad news to-day—garrison at Dewetsdorp had to surrender. This is disquieting, as it will encourage the Boers to go on. I see that Lord Roberts has

handed over the duties of Commander-in-Chief of the forces here to Lord Kitchener.

November 28.—Turned out at 6. Had my company out for Mounted Infantry drill from 9 till 10.30. Afterwards rode into Pretoria, and dined at the Transvaal Hotel with some old friends from the East Lancashires.

November 28.—To-day 500 lots of saddlery are coming up complete; we shall probably get them to-morrow. Next week we get horses, and the week after I shall probably go to my old corps, 7th Mounted Infantry, under Colonel Bainbridge. The general idea seems to be to get as many Mounted Infantry as possible, and to send them to districts permanently, making them responsible for clearing out and killing off all the remaining commandos and marauding parties. Real guerilla warfare!

November 29.—Intense heat. Took my men to ordnance stores and started drawing kit. Rode to Pretoria and saw Paymaster (*re* pay for company). To-day a man of the King's Royal Rifles was thrown off his horse and killed just by my tent—fractured skull.

November 30.—Turned out at 6.30. Had my lot out for Mounted Infantry drill; then rode over to ordnance to see if saddlery had turned up. From there rode over to Dasspoort Camp, and reported myself to my new Commanding Officer. We go to 14th Regiment Mounted Infantry. In the afternoon there was another terrific storm. Dinner at 7; turned in at 11. My new Commanding Officer and the other officers seem to be a very good sort.

December 1.—Turned out at 6.30. Took my men over to ordnance and drew a lot more kit. Late in the afternoon I received orders to move over to Dasspoort at 9.30 to-morrow morning; orders cancelled.

December 2.—Turned out at 5. Drew from ordnance all saddlery and remainder of kit. Church parade at 9; at 11 fitted saddlery together; at 2 had another parade for fitting saddlery. Rode into Pretoria. A lovely afternoon and a beautiful sunset. Lord Roberts

has gone home, and Lord Kitchener is Commander-in-Chief out here. I hear that Paget fought an indecisive action near here and had ninety casualties.

December 3.—Turned out at 6. To-day the orders are to march to Dasspoort Camp. Marched off with my commando and two waggons at 10. Reached camp at 11.30; got my men put into tents, and settled down. All my men are well equipped and have first-rate new saddlery, half colonial and half Indian saddles. Reported to my new Commanding Officer (Major Heigham, of the East Yorks).

My new regiment is 14th Regiment Mounted Infantry. It is composed of 2nd Middlesex, Manchesters, Gloucesters, East and West Yorks, Essex, and East Lancashires; more yet to come. I am glad to tell you that I am in command of my own company.

December 4.—Turned out at 5.30. As my men have no horses yet, they are all on fatigue duty for the day. So I spent the morning riding all sorts of horses. Just before the dinner hour Major Heigham came to inspect my men and lines.

December 5.—I am orderly officer to-day, with plenty to do. Turned out at 5. It was raining hard; in fact, it rained all night. Stables, 6; breakfast, 8; camp duties, etc.; stables, 12; grazing, 3; stables, 5; dinner, 7; turned in, 11.

December 6.—Turned out at 6 a.m.; had my men out for dismounted drill. In the afternoon walked into Pretoria and got some necessary kit.

December 7.—Turned out at 5. Borrowed forty horses to-day, and had my men out for riding drill. I gave them an hour before breakfast without stirrups. At 10 gave my men some more riding drill. They got on awfully well, and took to riding at once. They are a very good, keen lot, averaging twenty-three years old and 5 feet 6 inches high, typical chaps for this game. My Commanding Officer came and had a look at them, and was so pleased that he tacked us on to the remainder of the battalion for battalion drill. Quick work this!

December 8.—Turned out at 6. Brigade drill under General Alderson (our future General) at 10. As my men have got no horses they are all on fatigue. The Commanding Officer, however, gave me a section to look after. This seems the general idea: enemy lurking about hills north-west and south-west of Pretoria. The whole force (800 Mounted Infantry) moved off at 10.30. I was detailed as extreme right flank guard and scouts to main body. Moved off. Came into touch with enemy (men with white flags) at 1.30. Sent in report, got reinforced, and drove them off. A lovely, hot, clear day. I am perfectly happy, and in my element. Lots to do. My horse is a beauty, the best in the Brigade, very fast, and a real gentleman in looks.

December 10.—Turned out at 6. Marching order: parade for all at 10. Commanding Officer very pleased with appearance and saddlery of Middlesex Regiment. Walked into Pretoria. Very hot.

December 11.—Turned out at 6. Mounted parade 10 to 12. Walked to Pretoria. Dinner 7. Two officers of West Yorks, Porch and Barlow, came in to-day from that convoy fight near here. West Yorks had forty-three casualties. Both these fellows, although they were compelled to surrender owing to having no ammunition left, did very well.

December 12.—Turned out at 6. Early morning parade at 6.30. Breakfast at 8. Parade at 10. Walked into Pretoria. Band played to-day in the park. It is really very jolly to listen to a band again!

December 13 *and* 14.—Turned out at 6. Woke up at 4, and was surprised to hear continuous heavy firing between twenty and thirty miles due west of Pretoria. Early morning parade. Firing still going on. Mounted parade 10. At 11 all got sudden orders to return to camp at once. Did so. Orders to saddle up in full marching order, and be ready to move off by 1. We had no horses, but I got twelve of my men horses. The Commanding Officer gave me command of a full

section of forty men. Twelve (noon), I hear that General Clements has had a severe reverse from De la Rey at Nooitgedacht, by Rustenburg, and that he is hemmed in on all sides. Moved off at 1. Our force consists of: 900 Mounted Infantry, battery Horse Artillery, battery Colt guns, two battalions infantry; (General Alderson). General idea: to relieve Clements or cover his retreat. I was again detailed to look after right flank, and had to find support and extended scouts. Mobilized four miles due west of Pretoria. Moved off again at 4 p.m. Marched by road, Pretoria-Riedfontein-Commando Nek-Rustenburg. This road runs due west in a valley bounded on the north by the Magaliesberg and on the south by Dasspoort Rand. Marched steadily on for eighteen miles to Riedfontein, at which place we arrived at 10 p.m. Halted here for two hours till the moon got up. Fed and watered horses. Moved off again at 1 a.m. Crossed Crocodile River at 2 a.m.; fine road bridge of iron, four spans 40 feet high. Marched on for five miles more. At 3.30 a.m., about four and a half miles west of Commando Nek, met straggling groups of Clements' force. Regret to say bad news! General Clements was surprised this morning at Nooitgedacht, near Rustenburg, at 4.30 a.m. Outposts rushed four and a half companies of King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, one and a half companies of 'Fighting Fifth,' one section Horse Artillery (P Battery?). Two companies of Mounted Infantry are wiped out, either killed, wounded, or surrendered. All waggons and transport taken by De la Rey, who had about 3,000 Boers. Clements had only 900 to 1,000 men.

Orders at 3.45 a.m. for whole force to return to last camp (Riedfontein). Heard later that Colonel Legge is killed, besides many other officers. General Clements wounded slightly in leg.

What was left of Clements' force came in anyhow—without blankets, some without rifles, all without having had a taste of food for thirty-six hours, and

with the bitter recollection of a defeat and of their comrades who are no more. At the point where we met them they had marched for twenty-four miles, all night. Several waggons had wounded men—poor chaps!

We all marched back to Riedfontein, very sadly and very heavy of heart. Dawn appeared at 4.15, and we all trudged on. We reached Riedfontein at 4.45, and halted for orders from Lord Kitchener. There is only one feeling right through officers and men, and that is the firm determination to win at all costs. We shall, depend upon it! It is the first time I have ever seen a British soldier or force retiring, and I hope it will be the last! It is not a pleasant sight! The Boers are not playing the game fairly now; they use explosive Martinis and expanding bullets only, which give cruel wounds.

All are dead-tired. Picketed and fed horses. Had a very welcome breakfast at 7. Are awaiting orders. Lord Roberts at Pretoria. Probably we may move out to meet De la Rey any moment. Lovely day. Men fit and ready for anything. De la Rey's force 3,000 men, four guns, increasing every day. General Clements' force 900 men.

Clements' camp was in a kloof. On the hill he had six companies of infantry. At 4, outposts were fired upon. Colonel Legge was sent round on left; he drove the Boers back, and returned to camp. The six companies on the hill were now engaged. They were apparently surrounded, but held out till all ammunition gave out. Clements was unable to relieve them. The camp was then fired upon, and gradually surrounded. The position became untenable, so Clements had to retire as best he could. All behaved splendidly. They lost all ammunition, pom-pom shells, and 15-pound shells also.

In the afternoon I looked after my horses, etc. Our camp is very pretty, covered with mimosa-trees in bloom. We mess under a huge tree (huge for Africa),

and Hilton and I have rigged up a fine little shelter to live in with our waterproof sheets. Turned in at 10.

December 15.—Turned out at 5. Had a swim in the river. A lovely day, and the river is very picturesque. All kinds of birds hover about—kingfishers, frog-hawks, golden pheasants, and many others.

Orders received to stand by first thing to-morrow morning to trek off under Clements. Inniskilling Dragoons and 5th Lancers have arrived to strengthen our column. We probably go after De la Rey. General Broadwood is between twenty and thirty miles south-west from here. He has had a fight; I heard guns in that direction early this morning. I am very sorry I have not got my own men, but should not have horses for them. We are only 250 strong, instead of 450, the remaining 200 being left behind. I hope they will join us later on. However, the men I have now are pretty useful.

PART V

TREK UNDER GENERAL ALDERSON

Trek with General Alderson, Middlesex Company, 14th Mounted Infantry, December 16.

Turned out 3.30 a.m.; saddled up, and stood to arms. Unsaddled at 5. Stood by for orders. A fine, hot day. Received orders to trek off at once at 1.30. Rendezvoused west of Crocodile River. The column started at 2.30. We trekked due west in the valley, reached Scheedkepoort, eight miles west of Riedfontein, and went out to reconnoitre hills and bush. All clear. A lovely country, its green veldt and hills covered with farms, mimosa-trees in blossom, and blue gums. We reached our camp at 7.30.

December 17.—Turned out at 2 a.m., saddled up, and stood to arms. All clear. Unsaddled at 5. We trekked off due west at 8.45, and passed General Clements, a smart-looking, clean-cut soldier. All the country looks very beautiful, the veldt covered with long green grass and mimosas in blossom. The farms, too, are surrounded by orange groves of the deepest, richest green, and by peach orchards. The fruit is barely ripe yet. Every here and there a stream wends its way through the valley, its banks covered with trees. The birds are now in their finest summer coats.

To-day we formed part of the main body, with General Clements in command. We trekked on for ten

miles to a camp called Hartebeestfontein, near the head of the valley, and twelve or fifteen miles from the scene of General Clements' last disastrous fight.

Heavy firing was heard all day to south and south-east (General French in action, probably, with Smuts). Reached camp at 1.30, and saw Major Inglefield, R.A., in command of the 4·7 gun which was in action at the last fight, and which was most gallantly got away under heavy fire. Everybody fought desperately, till all the ammunition gave out, against a vastly superior enemy—900 to 3,000! Very creditable. Our casualties are 80 killed, 260 wounded, and 300 taken prisoners. The Boers acknowledge to 100 killed and 127 wounded.

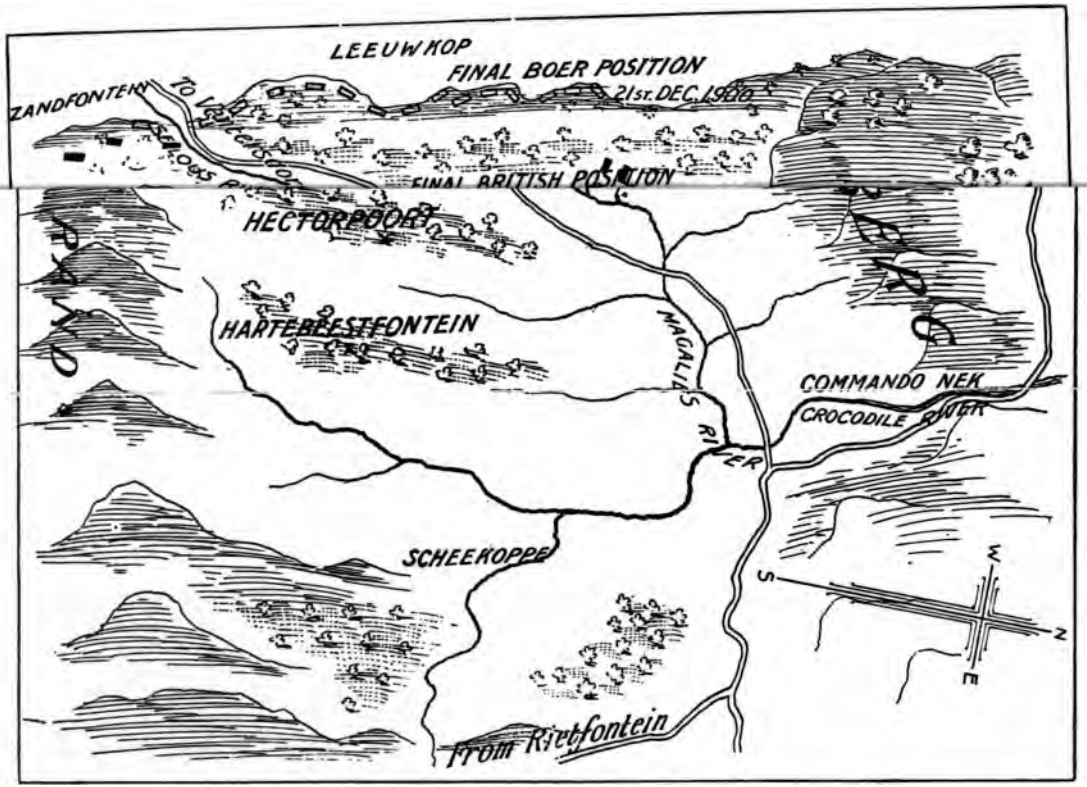
All the battalion went on outpost duty at 4, and formed a chain of outposts north, east, and south of camp. My section formed the south-east section of outposts. It was a very hot night, with distant heavy firing. All clear, however.

December 18.—Turned out at 2 a.m. Stood to arms. Received orders that we were to be relieved by the 11th Mounted Infantry at 5. Marched back to camp. A lovely morning; my outpost had the Crocodile River as south flank.

Force consists of: Four companies of Worcesters, 5th Battery R.H.A., 8th Battery R.F.A., 4·7 gun R.A., Inniskilling Fusiliers, Border Regiment; Mounted Infantry Brigade (11th, 12th, 13th, 14th) under General Alderson; Colt gun battery, Canadian Scouts, 2nd Mounted Infantry (all under General Clements).

Marched off at 9.30. Very broken country, with numerous drifts. Trekked due west, General French on left flank. A slow march; we reached camp (Hestorpoort) at 2. Boers are in close proximity, holding the identical position where they attacked General Clements. Turned in at 10.

December 19.—Reveille at 3 a.m. Trekked off in two columns: A column under Colonel Cookson on right flank, B column under General Alderson on left flank; 14th Mounted Infantry advanced guard, with



SKETCH OF POSITIONS DECEMBER 19, 1900.

four guns, J Battery R.H.A. Trekked west. We were in A column. We had just arrived at a difficult spruit, and had watered the horses, when I heard the 'pik-pok' of Mausers. Looking up the slope, I noticed the J Battery clearing for action. I galloped up, dismounted my men, got horses under cover, and took up a position covering guns. All round were dongas and lots of brushwood. The battery fired about twenty rounds. (This was at about 5.30 a.m.) Guns limbered up; I mounted my men, and all galloped forward to take up position on a flat-topped, horseshoe-shaped, green hill due west (Yeomanry Hill). Had to cross drift at full gallop. Here we met a heavy rifle-fire from two sides. The guns galloped on. One man in the Middlesex (Private Charnley) was hit clean through the chest by a Mauser bullet. I left a man to look after him. Had another man hit through the thigh with a Martini bullet. I am sorry to say my horse (the good un) also got shot; I felt him swerve, but he stuck to it all right. Three other horses were hit. No time to stop. Galloped on up hill. Guns were unlimbered and started a real good fire. Dismounted and took up position. Pretty heavy fire. Got range (2,300 to 2,500 yards), and started long-range volleys. Second Mounted Infantry and Hilton's section reinforced us. We remained here and held the hill for two hours. Hilton had two casualties, fortunately slight. The gunners lost eight horses and two men. Meanwhile General Alderson was working round on the left flank. A little later I saw three companies of the Inniskilling Fusiliers coming up in extended order to reinforce us. We all started a heavy fire. It was too hot for our friends, who got out of their cover and legged it on their horses as hard as they could split. There must have been from 400 to 500 of them. The battery shelled them as they retired. We watered horses, then the whole force advanced to the further green hill (One Tree Hill),

a long, oval-shaped hill rounded at top and covered with bush. J Battery and 8th Field Battery on extreme left shelled at a long range of little kopjes running north and south at 400 to 500 yards. After an hour or so (at 3.30 p.m.) the Boers got out of the kopjes, and legged it to west (probably Louwkop and Zandfontein). Also got a battery off. Returned to camp at 4.45. It was a soaking wet day, and everybody was wet through and through. Welcome grub at 5.30. Turned in at 8, dead-tired and very damp. It has been quite a good day's fight. General French was on our left and Gordon on our extreme right.

December 20.—Reveille at 3 ; raining hard. Trekked off at 4 to south-west. To-day we are left flank guard. We came into touch with the Scots Greys (French's right flank) at 7 a.m. All trekked on to a line of kopjes the Boers held yesterday, known as Boschfontein. Soaking wet! Reached camp (Boschfontein) at 4.30. Dinner. Turned in at 8. I have smoked no tobacco for three days ; have none left. I miss this more than anything. Went to hospital to see my wounded men. Both doing well.

December 21. — Reveille at 3. Trekked off at 4, west-south-west. To-day we are escort to guns of J Battery. We passed French's camp on left flank at 7 a.m. The camp looked very picturesque from where we were; he had not moved. It was a lovely morning, with those wonderful mists and clouds lying in layers in the valleys. As surmised, the enemy was reported to be holding the Zandfontein-Louwkop position — pretty stiff one, too. At 7.30 a.m. the whole force halted on the reverse slope of a gentle undulation. The guns loaded up. We received full complement of ammunition. At 8.30 a.m. trekked west-south-west to crest of hill. At 9 a.m. we halted at crest of the second ridge — quite a fine position running north to south. At 9.15 trekked on. Rifle-firing heard. We took up position on a line of hills running parallel to the Boer position.

J Battery started firing in order to draw fire and disclose the enemy's position. The whole of the 14th Mounted Infantry were dismounted on the reverse slope. This went on for some time. At 11 a.m. French's batteries came into action on the extreme left. The Boers' position was almost impregnable. They were in full force, and numbered about 2,000 or 3,000 men. Watered horses. At 12 o'clock Boone and his section were ordered to go forward and occupy a hill south-west of us, and nearer the Boer position. At 12.15 I was sent next to support him. The remainder of the 14th Mounted Infantry followed. An exciting ride. Mighty dongas, rivers, and thick bush. A desultory sniping. The action here became general. At last we reached Boone, and all lined hill and awaited events. At the foot of the hill ran a valley and river. At 2 p.m. had orders from General Alderson direct to move across the valley and reconnoitre a spur running south from Louwkop. The remainder of the 14th Mounted Infantry moved up in support. On ascending the hill I pushed out my scouts, but they had to retire owing to meeting a heavy rifle-fire. I dismounted my men and moved forward in very extended formation. On reaching crest came in for heavy fire. Luckily there was very long grass. All laid down. I spotted where the enemy was firing from, and started returning fire at 1,500 yards. Other sections here came up. At 3 p.m. I noticed Boers enveloping our left flank, and sent back message to this effect. Hilton, on the extreme left, came in for such a heavy fire that he was compelled to retire. This was a signal for a heavy cross-fire from Louwkop and our left flank. Two Boer guns started shelling us. Things did not look any too rosy. Kept up a good steady fire, however. A shell burst here so close to me and two men near me that we were all dazed for a second. Curiously enough, I was stone-deaf for the remainder of the day, and could hear nothing.

At 4, a cavalry regiment was seen to come up on our extreme left, but for reasons best known to themselves they retired and legged it. At 4.15 I fired all my ammunition, and got only twenty rounds per man left, which I kept in case of emergency. Things looked bad. Could not retire without orders. Boers closing in and firing at 500 yards. At 4.30 staff-officer shouted 'Retire!' Retired one man at a time on to our horses. Heavy shell-fire. Men and horses mixed up. However, got off at length, and galloped down the hill at full lick. Most exciting ride I have ever had. A steep descent. Every now and again Hilton, Boone and I had to stop to lift a Tommy up who had come a pearler. Galloped back to the hills where we originally were with J Battery under a running fire. Guns and Colt gun battery covered our retreat. The horses are dead done. Three of my men are missing, and several horses are shot or lost. We had several casualties, amongst others Sergeant-Major Lane wounded, chest and arm. The whole thing must mean some mistake somewhere. At 4.50 watered horses. A general action going on. The positions are enormous, and fifty men well posted can keep a whole regiment in check. Stone-deaf.

December 22.—Reveille at 5.30. Trekked off at 7.30. To-day we are main body. It is a lovely day, and the country most picturesque. Mighty hills and dongas, all covered with long green grass and trees in blossom. Thick bush, but the farms are burning everywhere. Rounded Oliphant's Poort, and went through Oliphant's Nek, which is held by a garrison of two companies Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, two companies East Yorks, two guns 75th Battery R.F.A. I never saw such lovely country, the long khaki column showing a dull yellow against a brilliant red dust road amidst a deep green foliage, and on either side the towering hills with their grim, rocky tops against a blue sky flooded with sunlight, and

the air clear as crystal. But high up, circling round and round, were the vultures. We trekked due east, and reached the camp the other side of Oliphant's Poort at 12.30. Turned in at 10. Not so deaf to-day. My horse getting well. I bandage him every night and iodoform him. He was shot through the hindquarters, both legs, the bullet passing slightly upwards. The entrance has healed up, but I can put three fingers in. Bones, however, intact. The horse is such a beauty that he is worth saving if possible; I think he is the best I have ever had, such a clinking good jumper.

December 23.—We march back to Riedfontein, and thence to Pretoria, where we refit. Reveille at 3. To-day right flank guard. Stiff work scouting amongst hills and bush. We trekked off at 4.15—a bright, fresh morning. Moved east-south-east. Heavy firing was heard from Oliphant's Nek; probably Broadwood and his cavalry brigade. We marched fourteen miles, and encamped at Buffelpoort near the river at 12.45. Turned in at 8, bringing in with us several waggons full of women and children whose men folk are on commando, and whose farms have been burnt. Poor things! they are very miserable.

December 24.—To-day is Christmas Eve—wonderful! Reveille at 2. Marched off at 3.30; main body to-day. A brilliant morning, and a blazing hot day. Fine march; to south the hills of the Magaliesberg, and to north the open veldt for miles and miles, broken here and there by chains of kopjes, and culminating in distant mountains 100 miles off. The atmosphere is so clear that each object seems to stand out separately against the blue sky. We trekked fourteen miles, then halted and camped at Volhuter's Kop near a stream, arriving here at 9.30 a.m. About half-way we passed the spot where a convoy was attacked, cut up, and burnt. For two miles we came upon burnt waggons and dead, stinking oxen. The road runs between hills and bush veldt, and the

Boers attacked from both sides. It was an extraordinary sight. I rode out to forage with Maclean and Boone. We went to a big Kaffir kraal north of camp whose head is a well-known chief, Machale. We saw him: a wonderfully intelligent man for a native; very educated indeed, speaking English well. Boone shot two guinea-fowls, and I got forty eggs and five fowls for our Christmas fare. A lovely evening. We got back to camp at 7.

December 25 (*Christmas Day*).—Reveille at 2.30. Trekked off at 4 due east. A lovely, warm day. To-day I am orderly officer, so I had to look after baggage waggons and dismounted brigade. Marched through Commando Nek, and camped at Riedfontein, close to where we camped a week ago. General Clements camped west of Crocodile River, and we east of same. We reached here with the waggons at 10.30. Breakfast at 12.30, then took horses to water and sent them out grazing.

December 26.—Reveille at 2 a.m. Stood to arms. Trekked off for Pretoria at 9. Clements remains here, and so do the 13th Mounted Infantry. We had to hand them over seventy fit horses. We marched seventeen miles to our old camp at Dasspoort, and reached here at 3. A very hot day. We probably refit and go to Johannesburg and district.

December 27.—Turned out at 6. Went to ordnance with Boone and drew all the kit I could for the regiment.

December 28.—Turned out at 5.30. To-day I drew horses for all my men and served them out. Very glad to get them mounted at last. My own good horse I have sent to hospital. Pretoria is very hard up for stores; hardly anything to be had at any price.

December 29.—Turned out at 5. At 9 received orders to go out and join Clements at Volhuter's Kop as soon as possible. I was given command of No. 2 Company; Hilton has No. 4. Trekked off due west at 11.30. Marched sixteen miles and reached Riedfon-

tein at 5.30, where we encamped for the night. Colonel Jenner, D.S.O. (Rifle Brigade), is our corps commander. Our corps is 5th Mounted Infantry; 13th Battalion (Major Pratt), 14th Battalion (Major Heigham). Our column consists of J Battery R.H.A., two Colt guns, 14th Mounted Infantry. (N.B.—Severe thunderstorms and heavy rains.)

December 30.—Reveille at 3.30. Trekked at 5 through Commando Nek to Volhuter's Kop. My company is as follows, in three sections: 2nd Middlesex Mounted Infantry, 52; Cameron Highlanders Mounted Infantry, 25; Highland Light Infantry Mounted Infantry, 12. Total, 89. Quite a little force to have! Reached Volhuter's Kop at 9.30 a.m., after having marched fourteen miles, and camped here for the day. General Clements here awaiting us. General Clements' force consists of 13th Mounted Infantry, 400 men; 14th Mounted Infantry, 400 men; J Battery R.H.A., 198 men; two Colt guns, 50 men (all under Lieutenant-Colonel Jenner, D.S.O.); Lincoln Regiment, 2nd Battalion Worcesters, Border Regiment, Inniskilling Fusiliers; 8th Field Battery; Royal Engineers (2,500, under Colonel Payne).

December 31.—New Year's Eve—last day of the year and the century. Reveille at 3. Stood to arms at 4. A most lovely morning. We expect to get some stiff fighting in a day or two. Darius Magale (Kaffir chief) reports that 1,000 Boers passed through Sterkstroom (ten miles north-west of here) yesterday. They were coming from north, and occupied hills at Buffelspoort (sixty-six miles east) with the intention of attacking the Rustenburg convoy. The native scouts confirm this, and report that many Boers came from the south, crossing Buffel's Nek last night, and that they joined the Buffelspoort commando. Rustenburg also confirms these reports, and states that the Boers are under De la Rey, Schoman and Boschman, and that they have two guns. It is also rumoured that Steyn is with this force. A native deserter from

the Boers at Warmbad states that they are very short of food, and that the cattle are dying in large numbers from long sickness. Jacobus Magale—another Kaffir chief—of Bethame, sent in to say that a further large force, which he estimates at 7,000 men, had come down from the north, passing Bethame on the evening of the 27th, and going towards Sterkstroom. Many local natives confirm this, and all state the country to be thick with Boers. Two native scouts from Rustenburg who arrived here this morning confirm the above report, and state they met a Cape boy on his way to Rustenburg who had run away from the Boers. This boy stated he was a servant of Steyn's, and had just come up from Heilbron, where his master had left De Wet. Major Vandeleur, who went out north to Louwkop, reports that his left flank saw about 200 or 300 Boers in the direction of Swartkop, and that all the local natives confirm the report that a very large force of Boers was holding the hills at Buffelspoort and Swartkop up to Bethame. Colonel Cookson, who went to Elands River, saw no Boers, but heard the same report of Major Vandeleur from the natives. The Boers—as usual before they mean fighting—are keeping very quiet, and not showing themselves at all. Of course, the native reports are exaggerated, but there is evidently a very large force in front and on our right flanks. Colonel Hickman, from Waterval, reports that natives have told him a large laager is forming at Sterkstroom. General French (Kutersdorp) reports all Boers in that vicinity to be moving north, and says that a captured despatch from the Boers to Smuts discloses that it is their intention to attack Krugersdorp and Johannesburg in the hope that we will evacuate the smaller towns such as Klerksdorp and Potchefstroom. This despatch may be a blind.

To-day I am orderly officer with a great deal to do. I have to look after 500 horses. I took them to water at 8.30 at a small stream two miles off, then grazed

them from 9.30 to 12.30. The country is bounded by Magaliesberg Hills. To the north it is open, but is broken by chains of small kopjes, which are said to be held by Boers. We all waited up to let the New Year in and to drink the health of parents and friends.

January 1, 1901.—Volhuter's Kop. Remained here for the day. Lincoln Regiment arrived from Pretoria. Reports come in from all sides stating that the Boers are in large numbers from Buffelspoort to Sterkstroom. Orders to move to Elands River tomorrow at 5 p.m. Turned in at 10.

January 2.—Reveille at 3 a.m. Stood to arms at 4. All movements are cancelled for the present. Firing was heard about thirty miles north. Horse-sickness is rather prevalent—I have lost six horses up to date—otherwise all seems quiet. The weather is very hot, and rather trying.

January 3.—Last night we received orders to move off at 1.30. Reveille at 12. Moved off at 1.30 due west, towards Buffelspoort. A moonlight night; a long, tiring march. We halted at Elands Kraal at 4. Here Jenner's force moved to the left flank, and General C. Clements' force to the right flank. Big hills are in between the forces. This is Buffelspoort. General Paget is supposed to be twelve miles north of us. We marched on in widely-extended formation, supported by four lines of infantry in extended order. Trekked on.

At 9 o'clock no sign of any enemy. Apparently all gone; recent traces, though, of Boer camps.

It is raining hard, and we have had heavy thunderstorms; all getting wet through. After scouting the surrounding country, hills, and passes, we returned to camp, due east of Elands River, at 2.30 p.m. Terrific rains! The camp a marsh; all cold and wet through. Trekked between thirty and forty miles. Turned in at 10, and slept as best we could.

January 4.—Reveille at 3; stood to arms at 4;

marched back due east at 4.45. Trekked twenty miles and halted near Riedfontein, west of Crocodile River. Arrived here at 12 noon and camped. Lunch at 1; dinner at 7. Turned in at 10. Lost seven horses; shot three of these.

January 5.—Reveille at 4. Trekked at 5 for Pretoria. Marched nineteen miles, and got back to Dasspoort camp at 1.30; inspected horses, etc. All are rather done up. My Scotch section returned to their unit; they were a very good lot, and I was sorry to lose them. They were old Mounted Infantry men from Egyptian service.

January 6.—Turned out at 6. To-day am orderly officer. I spent a very busy day making up deficiencies for things lost on service, and also doctoring horses. Lunch at 1. My horse, Tommy, getting better; probably be fit soon.

January 8.—Usual duties. To-day there were sports for the men. The prizes (money) were given by the officers. It all passed off very well.

A tropical downpour, and thunderstorms all night. We are soaked through and through.

January 10.—The battalion had orders to move off at 5. It was my turn to remain behind and look after the headquarters. Last night at 12 o'clock I rode over to camp, west of Pretoria, and fetched ninety horses. A beautiful moonlight ride! I got them safely back at 3 a.m.

Reveille at 3. The battalion marched off at 5. I spent a very busy day getting mess stores and sending them out, also drawing stores from ordnance.

The battalion returned at 6.30 p.m., after doing a reconnaissance in force twelve miles south-west of Pretoria. J Battery and Colt guns exchanged a few shots with the enemy.

January 11.—My company is now 160 strong. Sixty Manchesters arrived with horses. Company now consists of: 2nd Middlesex, 50; 2nd Manchesters, 60; East Yorks, 50. Total, 160 (under Hilton, Middlesex);

and three subalterns — Irvine, Smith (East Yorks), Waters (Manchesters).

Turned out at 6. Breakfast at 8. Inspected horses, men, and saddlery, and assorted the whole company into three sections. A beautifully hot day.

January 12.—Reveille at 5.30. I paraded all my company for dismounted Mounted Infantry drill. Heavy firing was heard about twenty miles off, in the north-east direction. At 10 o'clock had a mounted parade for my two new sections (East Yorks and Manchesters). At 10.30 I received orders to return to camp immediately and get saddled up. We moved off at 12 noon through Dasspoort south-south-west towards Quagga's Poort. My company consists of three sections, ninety strong; the remaining seventy men could not ride well enough, so were left behind. Gun-firing heard to south-east.

Passed through Quagga's Poort, and then proceeded east-south-east. Gordon in action south-east of Irene. Plumer and his column supposed to be due south of us. We marched about sixteen miles, scouting the country all round. No enemy visible. Camped near Oliphantsfontein, on Pretoria-Johannesburg railway. Reached camp about 6 p.m., my company finding all outposts. Put them out, then returned to camp at 9. Welcome grub! Turned in at 11, and just slept as we were, on veldt. No waggons up till 1 a.m. A fine night.

January 13.—Reveille at 3 a.m. Marched off at 4.30. I find flank guards. Sent Smith and his section on left flank, and Hilton on right flank. Marched due west; the object being to get into touch and communication with Plumer. After marching and scouting all round got into touch with Plumer on our left flank. Halted and camped at 1.30 p.m. about sixteen miles west-south-west of Pretoria. At 4 p.m. received sudden orders for whole force to return to Dasspoort immediately.

Our force, by the way, consisted of: 14th Mounted Infantry, 400 (Major Heigham); 13th Mounted Infantry,

350 (Major Pratt); J Battery (Captain Sykes); Colt guns (Lieutenant Hilton); under Colonel Jenner, D.S.O.

Trekked off at 5 p.m. for Dasspoort (advance-guard). Got sniped at on right and left flanks. Sent out Smith and his section to right, while I took another section to the left. Reported to Commanding Officer. We only came in for some desultory sniping. Kept up a fire till dark and till the whole column had passed the Boers in hills and bush on left flank. There were about twenty or thirty of them. Then I returned and pushed forward again. We had a long, weary march, through a pitch-dark night. The waggons stopped at different drifts. Pushed on. Met Colonel Jenner. Rode together, and I reported to him about left flank experience. We had a long chat. I reached Dasspoort at 1.45 a.m., and found that all had returned. Smith and his party are back. No casualties.

January 14.—Turned out at 5.30. Inspected horses, and sorted out fit from unfit; otherwise only usual camp duties. I have an enormous lot to do, and have to look after everything.

My routine in camp is: Stables, 6; see prisoners and defaulters, 8.30; parade, 9.45 till 12; stables, 12 till 1; check stores and make up company deficiencies in afternoon; stables, 5 to 6; besides all the many things one has to do when one has 170 men and 150 horses on one's mind. I have a good sergeant-major and three good subalterns to help me, fortunately.

January 15.—Turned out at 5. The usual duties. I drew stores and refitted company. In the afternoon I went to Pretoria and bought some necessaries. To-night I received orders to move the whole camp, and to march to Eerstefabrieken, ten miles east of Pretoria—probably to-morrow.

January 17.—Reveille at 4. Breakfast at 6.30. Packed up. Trekked off at 9.30. Force consisting of: 14th Mounted Infantry (Major Heigham); 13th Mounted Infantry, (Major Pratt); four guns J Battery (Captain Sykes); Colt gun battery.

A fine hot day. Reached Eerstefabrieken at 1. This country I know pretty well, as the last time Wellby and I were here with a machine-gun and forty men to keep line clear between Roodepoort and Eerstefabrieken. The place brought back many pleasant memories. We settled down to our new camp and got our tents pitched.

We are in a fine, open country; our camp is on high ground. The river runs west of the camp in north direction. We are probably here to form an extended line of outposts round Pretoria. Some move on, as five battalions came into Pretoria yesterday.

January 18.—Fourteenth Mounted Infantry received orders to go off at 1.30 with stripped saddles, on a foraging and reconnoitring expedition to four deserted farms, six miles south of camp, and twelve miles east-south-east of Pretoria. We started at 1.30, 250 strong, with eighteen empty waggons. Scouted out. All clear as regards enemy. Got four waggon-loads of forage, and returned to camp at 6. Turned in at 10.

January 19.—Reveille at 5. A heavy storm was coming up from west. All stood to tents. The storm was truly terrific; but the tents all stood.

The usual camp duties. There are an enormous number of fatigues to do, as they are building trenches and blockhouses all round. Half the regiment is on duty every day. At 12 Colonel Jenner came round and had a look at the horses.

Sunday, January 20.—Turned out at 7. Church parade at 10. Inspection of lines at 11. A fine, hot day. Something is going on east, as twelve trains have passed here full of troops. At 4 I took a party of thirty men and went on building the blockhouse; it is on a low hill one mile north-east of camp, and commanding a long stretch of country as well as the railway. Returned 6.30. Turned in at 11.

January 21.—Turned out at 5.30. A lovely, cold morning. Riding parade with my section. I am

sorry to hear, in the army orders, that the Queen is seriously ill. It would be a great disaster for the country if she died just now.

Riding parade 11 to 12.30. Turned in at 10.

January 22.—Reveille at 5.30. Turned out. Made up deficiencies of company from store. At 11 o'clock we had battalion drill under Commanding Officer. My company drilled splendidly, and were complimented.

In the afternoon I took out a reconnoitring party of forty men and three waggons for foraging and wood. We had to go to a farm six miles north of camp. All was clear. We got a fine haul of timber, and twenty sacks of peaches, potatoes, quinces, green figs, and apples, and returned at 6 to camp. The weather is perfect, and there are most brilliant sunsets. Our tent faces the west, and every evening I watch the glorious sun, and write a bit of my letter to you. Hilton was bitten by a venomous little snake, and I spent an anxious night with him. Poor chap! he was in great pain. I sat up all night, and so did the doctor. He recovered at 3.30 a.m., and slept.

January 23.—Hilton is not fit for duty to-day, so I took his place in No. 1 Company, which was ordered to do a reconnaissance in force to Jeanfontein, ten miles east-south-east of us. We started at 6.30 a.m. Fryer was advanced guard, I main body. We scouted the country. At 9.30 a.m. we reached Jeanfontein, and found that Boers were reported, so we pushed on. We saw between twenty and fifty 4,000 yards east-south-east, going off helter-skelter. Pushed on, and exchanged shots. Halted. Brass sent me forward then to push on and reconnoitre. Shoved along at trot. Went three miles. All clear. Enemy evacuated. All returned to Jeanfontein. At 2.30 p.m. we returned to camp. All clear. Reached camp 5.30 p.m. Here heard that the Queen died yesterday at 12 o'clock. It is a great shock to all the troops, and has cast a gloom over everybody. What a loss to the Empire! For years and years every Englishman in every part of the

world has looked up to her, the Sovereign, with both reverence and devotion. She has been part of his creed and religion, and now she is no more! Perhaps the greatest Sovereign—certainly the foremost lady—the Empire has ever seen. 'Long live the King!'

Hilton is much better.

PART VI

DRIVES UNDER GENERAL FRENCH WITH FIFTH CORPS FROM PRETORIA TO DUNDEE.

Eerstefabrieken, near Pretoria, 14th Mounted Infantry.

My last letter was dated up to January 23.

January 24.—Reveille at 5.30 a.m. No. 2 (mine) and No. 1 Company on reconnaissance duty to-day. Started at 9. My section is right flank guard. We trekked off east-south-east to the same place we went yesterday. Colonel Jenner came in command. We took a Colt gun. Near Jeanfontein my right flank came into touch with a Boer picket. The Boers legged off to south-east. I reported to Colonel Jenner. We halted at Jeanfontein. The object of the march was really to select a site for a new camp.

January 25.—Turned out at 5. To-day I am corps orderly officer. We are under orders to go for a month's trek to-morrow. Most of the officers rode into Pretoria to get necessaries and stores. I took the horses to water and to graze. Visited outlying vedettes, mounted outposts and pickets. Posted same. At 10 p.m. went round all posts and got back at 1 a.m. I had to visit them twice, so started my round again at 2 a.m., and got back at 4. Stood to arms till 6 with inlying pickets. Returned to camp.

January 26.—Orders to move off at 9 with a force consisting of: 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry, two 15-pounders G Battery R.H.A.; six 12-pounders J Bat-

tery R.H.A.; one pom-pom; six Colt guns (all under Colonel Jenner, D.S.O.).

Handed to Commanding Staff Officer report for last twenty-four hours. Trekked off at 9. To-day main body. Marched six miles to Mooiplaat south-south-east. Reached camp at 12 mid-day. Maclean, the Adjutant, has rejoined. Lieutenant Pratt and twelve men Royal Scots joined, and go to No. 1 Company. Lieutenant Warnford, 44th Goorkhas, has also joined, and goes to No. 4 Company.

Object of trek: We form part of a big movement south to Ermelo to drive Boers east. We are one of six columns. Our force consists of the 14th Mounted Infantry, 400 men (Major Heigham); 13th Mounted Infantry, 300 men (Major Pratt); Canadian Scouts, 50 men (Major Howard); Canadian pom-pom (Lieutenant Hilton); (Colonel Jenner, D.S.O.). Colt guns, six; J Battery R.H.A., six guns; G Battery R.H.A., two guns (Captain Sykes); one battalion Yorkshire Light Infantry (King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry), 800 men, all under General Alderson.

January 27.—Reveille at 3. We trekked east-south-east at 4.45 a.m. To-day we are advanced guard. At 8 a.m., pushed forward with Canadian Scouts; sniping. At 9 a.m. reached crest of ridge; undulating veldt; column halted. At 9.15, in valley farms held by Boers. King sent me forward to support scouts, and to take the farm in the centre. He was in support with the remainder of the company. Galloped forward; Boers, fifty to eighty, cleared. Dismounted and sent some shot after them, then mounted, proceeded to farm, and came in for a fairly heavy fire from ridge (Rudekopjes), held by about 200 to 300 Boers. At 11 a.m. proceeded east; kept up a running fire. At 12 noon ordered forward by General Alderson to hold a hill two miles east, as Boers were threatening. King sent me forward with company in support. Galloped on, reached hill, dismounted, and started firing on a party of Boers in valley at 1,500 yards. Effective; Boers

went off. Remained here for five hours keeping a sharp look-out. Column eight miles away and halted. At 5.30 p.m. orders to return to camp. Returned at 7, hungry and tired. A good day. The company did magnificently, and we had no casualties. Colt gun was, however, captured by Boers on extreme left, and two Canadians killed; Lieutenant Ryan taken prisoner, but released. The Boer force was in strength.

January 28.—Reveille at 3; started at 4.45. To-day sent out on special duty to bring in women and cattle on left flank. Company behind guns. Marched south-east, and afterwards east. Sent in 100 sheep, then was ordered back by General's orders for another duty. Trekked on with main body. At 12 noon ordered out to reconnoitre hills on our right flank and get in touch with Captain Ross. Colonel Jenner sent me out. I pushed forward and got into touch at Hectorpoort. Spotted Boers; all galloped forward. An exciting ride under fire, but we just failed to catch twelve of them. Pushed on with scouts. Burnt big grist-mill, fourteen waggons, and some thousands of tons of forage, then sent women back to column to be sent on to Pretoria. All the time we kept up a running fire with Boers hanging round on the hills. The Canadian Scouts are first-rate, and my men are doing well. We returned to camp at 6. I reported to Colonel Jenner and Major Heigham, and was congratulated on my work.

General scheme of operations: We are one of five columns—Alderson's column, Knox's column, Allenby's column, Pulteney's column, Dartnell's column.

Objective: To sweep the district bounded on the north by Delagoa Bay Railway, and on the south by the Natal Railway clear of the enemy. Column on January 27 as follows: Alderson, Moorplaats; Knox, Bapsfontein; Pulteney, Pultfontein; Dartnell, Springs.

On January 29 the following positions will be taken up: Alderson, Vangelfontein; Pulteney, Vangelfontein;

Dartnell, Gejund; Paget, Vlakfontein; Colville, Witpoort.

All halt here till February 1, 1901. Columns will then move as follows: Alderson to Vlakfontein, Knox to Boschman Kraal, Allenby to Trigardisfontein, Dartnell to Vlakspruit, Colville to Megers Vlei.

Campbell will reach Wolverfontein from Middleburg; another column will reach Vlakfontein from Wonderfontein. Smith-Dorrien will reach Carolina. In all, eleven columns—80,000 men.

On February 4 Paget will reach Welgelegen, Alderson will reach Ermelo, Knox will reach Witpoort, Allenby will reach Stipp, arriving February 6 and 7.

Dartnell goes to Amersfort, Colville goes to Uitkyk, on the Standerton-Ermelo road. Smith-Dorrien goes to Bothwell. All columns working together. Enemy will thus be driven east towards Swaziland.

Arrangements for supplies are made from Middleburg, Carolina, Standerton, Balmoral, Wonderfontein. Empty waggons go to Standerton and Greylingstad. Fine scheme; all Lord Kitchener. He is a wonderful organizer! Camp to-day at Witklip Bank.

January 29.—Reveille at 3 a.m.; trekked off east-south-east at 4.45. To-day we are advanced guard. At 6 a.m. changed direction to due east. At 6.30. sent out on right flank by King to reconnoitre two farms four miles out. Found both deserted. Burnt forage, waggons, 1,000 Martini and Mannlicher ammunition, and got plenty of chickens, turkeys and geese. Knox's column revealed themselves by a long line of burning farms on the extreme right (fifteen miles). At 8.30 a.m. rejoined King and trekked on. At 9.30 a.m. scouts again came in contact with our friends, who were now visible to us. They stretched from extreme left to extreme right, about twenty miles, in bodies of from 80 to 100 each, and were about 1,000 to 1,500 strong. Here a somewhat exciting incident occurred. Davidson, one of the Canadians, about 2,500 yards ahead, was suddenly confronted with four

Boers, who demanded his surrender. He replied by shooting the man and killing him on the spot. The other three legged it. Another Boer was hit, and died almost directly. We pushed on, and at 11.30, when we were two miles west of Wilge River, saw about 1,000 Boers retreating east with waggons. At 11.40 J Battery came up and shelled them with effect. At 11.50 we left scouts and pushed on towards our right flank, I finding scouting line. We came in contact with some Boers who were in a farm and occupying a ridge immediately above it. Commenced firing. The Boers retreated. We halted, by General's orders, for three hours, Knox's column being on our right. At 3.45 p.m. Barton's (?) Scouts came in touch with us. At 4.15 p.m. returned to camp (Vangelfontein); burnt forage and waggons on the way.

January 30.—Vangelfontein. Reveille at 3 a.m.; stood to arms at 4.30. All quiet. Very bad water here. To-day heard the very bad news that the Cape Dutch have risen. This is most serious; it means that all the troops are in danger of being cut off from supplies; it also means another 50,000 men out here, and a prolongation of the war for an indefinite period, possibly years! All remained saddled up and ready to move. We moved off at 3 p.m., and shifted camp, but only went two miles to a spot close to Wilge River. Good water again!

January 31.—Vangelfontein. Reveille at 3. Saddled up and stood to arms 4.30. A lovely sunrise. I remained in camp to-day—a welcome rest! I have two ripping horses for my cart (slight sore-backs); fitted it all up and had a drive to try it. My skipper, King (Captain in Canadian Dragoons and a Colonel) is a sterling good fellow and a first-rate soldier; all the Colonials, indeed, are splendid, and real good fighters; most interesting too. Major Gat-Howard, who is in command of them, is a Yankee, and went all through the American War. He has seen much service with Red Indians, and is a typical scout leader. I have

learnt a lot from his methods. I am sorry to say horse sickness is rife; we lost six horses to-day, among them my English hunter, the 'Swell.' I am awfully sorry; it is a fearful disease, and there seems no cure. A horse sickens and dies in six hours. Supplied by convoys sent in as per general scheme. General Paget ordered back to railway, probably on account of Cape Dutch rising.

February 1.—Reveille at 2 a.m.; breakfast at 3. Trekked off due east 4.45. To-day main body (permanent billet of advance-guard to scouts not come off yet; expect to get it, though, every day). We furnish flank guards and 13th Mounted Infantry advanced guards. Trekked on till 10.15. The country all along rolling and undulating green veldt, studded with farms. At 10.30 came in contact with between 400 and 500 Boers. Heard guns on the right—Knox and Allenby in action. Fourteenth Mounted Infantry and J Battery went forward at a trot and occupied ridge. Battery came in action and shelled Boers, who were legging it east-north-east. All pushed forward. At 11.30 sent forward to reconnoitre and occupy a long ridge one and a half miles east. Found all clear. Got into helio communication with Knox. The Boers are all retreating east-north-east. We remained here for four hours, and at 4 p.m. had orders to return to camp just below and west of ridge. Name of camp Bombardy. We are losing horses every day from horse sickness. March to-day was eleven miles.

February 2.—Bombardy. Reveille at 2; breakfast at 3. Trekked off at 4.45. Fourteenth Mounted Infantry are advanced guard and main body. Thirteenth Mounted Infantry furnish flank and rear guards. To-day I am orderly officer. My duty is to be in charge of led horses and keep with waggons; we each have to do our share of this work. There were seventy-two led horses (all sore-backs and stiff uns). As far as I could gather it was an uneventful march for all. Several farms cleared, but met no Boers; evidently all

have retreated. We shall probably have an engagement in a day or two, when we encounter more hilly country. We have a monotonous trek of sixteen miles to come just east of Riet Spruit (Dap Spruit ?), a tributary of Oliphants River, really Steenkool Spruit. A hot day; we reached camp at 1.30 p.m. Nearly all out watching front and flanks, and all returned in small commandos between 3 and 4. To-day we got 2,000 sheep and 500 oxen. It is a rich grazing country. We have cool, moonlight nights.

February 3.—Riet Spruit (Steenkool Spruit). Reveille at 2.30; breakfast at 3; parade and march off at 4.30. To-day I am escort to guns. We trekked about eight miles east-south-east to Boschkaans by Oliphants River, arriving at 9. A hot day. We were in touch with Colonel Knox on right flank, and scouts in touch with retreating Boers. Heavy firing to north-east. Campbell in action, probably twelve to fourteen miles north of us. All our company are on outpost to-night. We trekked off at 3.15 and occupied a high oval-shaped hill south of camp, Boone's company being one mile east of us. At 5 posted sections and sentries; my section at the bottom of the hill at Kaffir Kraal facing ridge occupied by enemy's pickets. A brilliant moonlight night; dinner in open. Brought cart with plenty of provisions. Our outpost four miles from camp. At 7 p.m. posted sentries and told off patrols. All quiet. Visited posts twice. A wonderful night.

February 4.—Reveille at 3; breakfast at 3.30. We had orders to occupy ridge, and if possible drive out the Boers holding the ridges south-east of us. I was to guard extreme right and occupy a farm called Rensburg Hoop, also, if possible, get into touch with Knox. All started at 4 a.m. by moonlight. At 5 a.m. reached farm at Rensburg Hoop. Boers all cleared. Sent twenty horses and forty cattle back to main body. At 5.30 a.m. got in touch with Major Innes, 12th Lancers, left flank guard to Colonel Knox's column (2nd Cavalry Brigade).

General French is close by. Sent message to General Alderson to this effect. Remained here for orders. At 7 a.m. orders to return to my company and all to join main body. Did so. Trekked nine miles east-north-east and halted and camped at Schurvekop, arriving here at midday. Captain Ross and Canadian Scouts were sent out on left flank to get in touch with Campbell's column, Warnford in support. Failed to do so owing to opposition. Lost three men killed (including their sergeant-major), and eight men missing, three being selected scouts from my company. Captain Brass, with No. 1 Company, was rearguard, and had a scrap, having one man wounded (leg shattered) and one taken prisoner. We have now about 10,000 oxen and 15,000 sheep and goats.

February 5.—Schurvekop. Reveille at 2.30 a.m.; trekked off about due east at 4.45. To-day I got the billet I like—support to the Canadian Scouts. King, my skipper, I am sorry to say, has gone sick with dysentery, so I get command of the company again. Trekked off. All pretty quiet. Trekked fifteen miles through the rolling, undulating veldt, with many long halts owing to oxen and mules being done up. It was a hot day. Reached Witbank, just south of Nooitgedacht, and halted, as we probably encamp in this place. At 6 p.m. received orders that I and my company were to remain where we were, and form an outpost line for the night. No waggons up, consequently there is no food for the men and no forage. I sent out a party to forage and get wood and water; also sent in for my cart. At 10 p.m. got a few things. A clear night. I was awake most of the time, as the Boers are in fairly close proximity on the right flank. In touch with Campbell's column about eight miles north, and Knox's column ten miles south by helio. All clear.

February 6.—Witbank (Nooitgedacht). Stood to arms at 3 a.m. Breakfast at 3.30. Column passed us at 5 going due east. Got sent on special duty by General

Alderson himself to push out with my company on right flank and keep touch between our column and his. Had signallers with me. At 5.15 a.m. started off. Country becoming more hilly. Got seven miles out south-south-east, and at 7 a.m. got into helio communication with Colonel Knox and French's columns (the latter about fifteen miles south-south-east of us). All clear of enemy. A long and interesting trek; the column marched about sixteen miles; my company did about thirty. We halted and camped at 5 p.m. at Mooifontein, the column having travelled east-south-east, east, and north-east. Dinner at 7. Turned in at 10. Very glad to get to bed. Horses rather done.

February 7.—Mooifontein, five miles north of Ermelo. Reveille at 3.30; trekked off east at 5. To-day No. 4 Company are support to scouts, and we are main body with guns. We only marched three miles and halted. Had orders for No. 2 (my company) and No. 3 to go off and escort a convoy of Boer women, empty waggons, oxen and cattle to Bothwell by Lake Chrissie, nine miles north-east of here, to leave at 4 p.m. The remainder of our force is remaining here till we return; we bring back supplies. Campbell's guns heard at 7.30 a.m. The whole force, except Nos. 2 and 3 Companies and Colt guns, went out to support Campbell. Shocking bad luck to be out of this; however, we must take the good with the bad. This place is called Welgelen. At 2 the force returned, having failed to come in contact with the enemy. However, they succeeded in getting in touch with Smith-Dorrien's advanced guard from Bothwell (nine miles north-east of us) and also Campbell's column. The latest information is that Smith-Dorrien had a night attack from the Boers, and lost one officer, nineteen men killed, and 115 wounded; that the Boers attacked the West Yorkshire Regiment by night somewhere near Belfast, and that the latter had many casualties; also that the Boers have broken through.

DARTNELL

SMITH-DORRIEN ALLENBY

CAMPBELL ? FRENCH

ALDERSON KNOX

? Puzzle, find the Boers!

Of course, we get no reliable information whatever, and one knows nothing. We started with convoy at 3 p.m., Major Heigham in command. Force: two companies 14th Mounted Infantry, two companies 13th Mounted Infantry, two Colt guns and 100 infantry. It is cold, and raining like blazes. We marched nine miles north-east through the dark for eight weary hours, and halted at Campbell's camp. I had a scratch meal, and turned in. I slept in our tonga. Smith, my subaltern, has not turned up at all. I think his cart must have broken down, and he is trying to get it along. It has our tent on.

February 8.—Bethel. Turned out at 5.30. It is still raining hard. I fed the horses and looked after things generally. Full waggons came back from Smith-Dorrien at 11 with nine days' supplies, also with forty-nine Boer women, ten wounded Boers, and fifteen prisoners, who were handed over to me. I called a roll, checked them off, and signed for them. That attack on Smith-Dorrien occurred the night before last here at Bethel. He arrived late at night, and, in unconsciousness of the fact, actually encamped within two miles of a big Boer force and its laager of waggons. The Boers attacked by night to cover the retreat of their waggons. Did so successfully, and trekked towards Carolina. That affair with the West Yorkshires was one and the same thing, this battalion belonging to Smith-Dorrien's column. The Boers had twenty killed, whom we buried, and there were many wounded. The general idea now is that Smith-Dorrien makes a détour round the hills north-east and then east: that Campbell, Alderson, Knox and French go east, and all converge towards

Amsterdam. Objective: to round up two commandos known to be east of us and a large convoy and laager. French is at Ermelo, and is very pleased with operations.

I met Callahan (officer, Canadian Scouts), Davis (Canadian Scout, and really a Red Indian), and another, who rode forty miles through the Boers with despatches from Kitchener viâ French and Alderson to Smith-Dorrien. They had a marvellous ride: one had to bury the despatches and dodge the Boers. Davis, the redskin, was taken prisoner, but escaped by shooting several Boers with his revolver. At night Callahan dug up the despatches and got them in safe. It reads like Fenimore Cooper. I have no time to write details, but it was a wonderfully exciting ride.

We trekked back with convoy to Mooifontein (Alderson's camp), and got there safe and sound at 7 p.m. It was raining hard all the time and was very cold. Dinner at 7. I turned in with my stable-companion, Hilton, in my own welcome tent at 9.

February 9.—To-day I have been a year on the trek on actual active service. Stood to arms from 3 a.m. till 5.30. Breakfast at 7. The force rests to-day; that means only usual camp duties, and the looking after horses, etc.—a welcome rest! We trek to-morrow. King, my skipper, has gone sick altogether, and goes to Standerton Hospital, so I take over my company again. All the Boer women, the sick, etc., have gone to-day to Ermelo.

February 10.—Mooifontein. Reveille at 3. Marched off east-south-east at 5. To-day I had to furnish half-company rearguard and half-company foraging duty. I sent Smith with rearguard, and I took the foraging party on left flank as ordered. On the whole it was an uneventful march; no enemy anywhere. I was fairly successful, sending in 3,000 sheep, 700 oxen, and about 1,000 goats. We marched ten miles. I have got ten new horses, and have broken each one in myself. I am learning how to lasso with a lariat — good,

exciting work. Owing to the horses, I reached camp very late—5 p.m. There was a drizzling rain in the morning, but it was fine and hot later on. I turned in at 9. Every man was to sleep fully equipped, as a night attack was expected. French is now in command. Only a few Boers—about 1,000—broke through; 3,000 are still in front of us. All is going well apparently. Our camp is at Goedehoop.

February 11.—Goedehoop. The night passed quietly. Reveille at 3.30; marched off east-north-east at 5. To-day we are main body with guns. We had a quiet, uneventful march. The day was fine. To the south one could see the Drakensberg Mountains 100 miles off. We marched six miles, and halted and camped at Dreifontein. There are big lakes or pans all round—in fact, it is a beautiful country: the veldt is wonderfully green. Our camp is by a lake quite a mile square; these lakes are only shallow depressions in the ground, and fordable right through. I am sorry to say five men are under sentence to be shot for sleeping on their posts. Examined horses. Dinner at 7. Half my company on outpost under Smith. Turned in at 9. On special duty to-morrow.

February 12.—Dreifontein. Reveille at 3. The column started east-south-east at 5 a.m. I, with half my company, went with No. 4 Company (Boone's), under Captain Brass (No. 1 Company), right out on the right flank, to get in touch with Knox's column. There was a thick mist, just like good old England. At 6 a.m. the fog lifted, and it was a glorious morning. It was wonderful, seeing the layers of mist and the brilliant sunshine, while the lakes and the veldt were covered with a silvery dew. We trekked south-south-east by south to Fox Hill, then on to some high ground at Bothman's Loop, and then on to still higher ground at Schimmelhoek, our destination. We arrived at 11 a.m., having marched sixteen miles. Drove out twenty Boers; desultory sniping on both sides; no casualties.

At 12 noon got into touch with Knox 6 miles south-south-east. Helioed back to General Alderson. The latest news is that Smith-Dorrien has captured, at a small loss, 80 waggons, 300 oxen, and 50 Boer prisoners. Went to farms all round. In one I found hidden 2,000 rounds Mauser ammunition, which I burnt.

At 2 p.m. returned to camp, a long, weary march of fitfeen miles. A very dangerous march this in the valleys—all vleis (bogs). We lost four horses and nearly lost two men; just saved them in time. Reached camp at 7.30 (camp is at Tolderia). What with scouting, etc., I must have ridden forty miles. I had to change all my clothes, as I was wet through.

February 13.—Tolderia. Reveille at 3; trekked east-north-east and then east, and then south-south-east, at 5 a.m. To-day my company were supports to scouts. A lovely morning. We trekked ten miles, then halted and camped at Klipburg at 10.30 a.m. An uneventful march. The enemy seem to have cleared out thoroughly demoralized; they won't stand to fight. Fine scenery here. The country is getting rugged, and far away to south and south-east are the mountains of Swaziland. We are in touch with Knox at Spitzkop to south of us, and with Campbell eight miles north-east of us.

February 14.—Klipburg. About 8 miles east of us we can see Amsterdam, a small townlet. Reveille at 3; marched off south-east at 4.45. At first we were main body; Smith I detailed as rearguard, according to orders. All plans changed. Our column changed direction to south-south-east by south. I, with four sections, went out on extreme right advanced flank in line with scouts. Our orders were to push on to Hartebeestefontein. No. 3 Company (Warnford) on extreme left of scouts. Pushed out. Rugged country; rather difficult, owing to ravines and vleis. Hilton came with us; he scouted with his section for me on the right.

At 9 a.m. captured 2 Boers, 10 horses, 150 oxen, and 2 waggons, at a Kaffir kraal; I sent back the same under escort to main column.

At 9.30 a.m. came into helio communication with Colonel Knox's column eight miles south of us. We crossed two big rivers, Usutu and Umbemque, difficult to ford on extreme right. Trekked on. Magnificent country; blazing hot day.

At 11 a.m. column changed direction to east, so I altered direction and made for Morgenstand and Pambatt Farm (*vide* map).

At 1 p.m. reached Morgenstand and halted. Column five miles behind.

At 4 p.m. column moved on to Morgenstand and encamped.

February 15.—Morgenstand. Reveille at 3 a.m. Moved off due south. Alteration again in the general plan. To-day we are main body. A lovely morning; later on it was tremendously hot. We had an uneventful march: trekked seventeen miles, then halted and camped at 5.30 p.m., three miles north of Derby, at a place called Rost. My company was on outpost duty to east of camp, holding a long ridge and the river. Found four posts. Then came a terrific thunderstorm. However, got mealies for horses and killed four sheep for the men at a Kaffir kraal. I was about all night visiting my posts. It was pitch-dark and raining hard.

February 16.—Camp near Derby. Stood to arms at 3 a.m., and pushed out reconnoitring patrols. All clear. At 5 a.m. orders to return to camp; relieved by vedettes. At 6 a.m. breakfast, very welcome. At 7 a.m. went to kraal with twenty of my men and caught fifteen horses. Great sport; all wild. I got a beautiful chestnut mare for myself. She was a nailer to catch, saddle up and ride, for she bucked like steam. At 9 a.m. the whole force trekked off to Derby, and camped on high ground, reaching here at 10 a.m. We may probably remain here for two days. General

French is at Piet Retief, eight miles south of us. Boers at ? ? ?. In the afternoon I examined horses, and broke in some of our newly-captured ones. Dinner at seven. Turned in at 10. Drizzling rain all day; cold.

February 17.—Derby. Stood to arms at 3 a.m.; orders to go out at 6 a.m. east, then proceed south-east towards Swaziland border, to round up 200 or 300 Boers shut up in the hills with their waggons.

The force consisted of 14th Mounted Infantry (Captain Brass); 13th Mounted Infantry (Major Pratt); four guns J Battery (Captain Sykes); two Colt guns; Canadian Scouts (Captain Ross). All under Major Gat-Howard, Royal Canadians.

Singular that a British force should be commanded by a semi-American officer! There is a cold drizzling rain, and it is very misty. We started at 8.30 a.m. I was support to scouts and advanced guard. Trekked eight miles east and south-east, and halted in the hills owing to the rain and thick white mist. Dick's force is also moving, as well as Campbell and Smith-Dorrien. Objective of all: to round up these Boers and waggons.

Waited till 3 p.m. Still misty. Suddenly the scouts moved forward at a trot, and I followed on their heels. It is an extraordinarily difficult country, with its hills, valleys, and deep gorges. Heard rifle-fire and Mausers going off, so pushed forward; dismounted my men and again pushed forward. Found Canadians holding a rocky ridge immediately in front of a huge kopje, which was steep and covered with bush. In the valley were four Boer waggons; pushed on and joined them. I am sorry to say Major Howard and his orderly were found killed, and a native scout shot.

Poor Major Howard no doubt met his death by going too far ahead alone. He spotted the waggons, went to them, and got shot. A little later I heard that he actually surrendered, and the Boers shot him afterwards. He was hit in three places—arm, jaw, and

stomach—all expanding cartridges. His orderly had a terrible wound through the back and stomach. Well, we burnt all the waggons, put the two dead men in sheets, and sent for an ambulance. I only saw the Major in the morning, and he gave me all instructions about following his scouts up. He was fifty-five yesterday; a splendid scout and soldier, his one and only fault being his daring, if it can be called a fault. Beattie, the General's A.D.C., was the first to find them. He had his horse shot, and had a narrow escape as well, as they were potting at him at 200 and 300 yards. Major Pratt took the command and sent back word that we were to retire as soon as we could, as it was getting dark, besides being more misty. The fact is that Major Howard and his orderly were foully murdered after surrendering and laying down their arms.

I was detailed as rearguard; rather a ticklish job in this country. Tongas came up with our doctor (Ingall). As an ambulance is always safe, I left him with the dead and wounded. I was some way behind the column.

At 6.30 p.m. it was pitch-dark, raining hard, and very cold. I pushed on as I best could, trusting to luck. I had thirty-eight men with me as rearguard. We picked up several stragglers with done horses.

At 8 p.m. struck what looked like our round; no stars—nothing for direction. Pushed on. It was raining; the men were very miserable, all being on half-rations.

At 10 p.m. struck our camp after a long, weary trek. I saw the horses and men fed, and had my own welcome grub. Turned in at 11.30 p.m. It is clear that the day was too misty for us to achieve our object. What the other forces did will come out later. By the way, Dick's force is Captain Dick of the 13th Mounted Infantry, who took a little force from this column a few days ago, consisting of two guns J. Battery, 100 men King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 100 men 13th

Mounted Infantry, twenty Canadian Scouts, two Colt guns, to keep connection between our force and Campbell's on our left or about north of us. Hilton went off this morning to fetch a convoy of Boer prisoners and women from Dick's column, sent in by Campbell and Smith-Dorrien.

In to-day's manœuvres the Boers cleared off into a valley; we did not go after them as night was approaching, and it was far too foggy.

February 18—Derby. Stood to arms at 3 a.m. Raining hard still, and cold. Men and horses are on quarter rations, and nobody in over-good spirits. Remained in camp all day and looked after horses, etc. Doctor and tongas not come in yet. Sent out foraging parties and obtained mealies from surrounding farms. Turned in at 10. It rained all day; the ground is very swampy.

February 19.—Reveille at 5. Boone and 100 men escorted empty waggons, Boer prisoners and children to Piet Retief, and bring out convoy of supplies. The whole force turned out at 9 a.m. to the same place we went to the day before yesterday under Colonel Jenner, to round up Boers in the hills; Smith-Dorrien, Dick, and Campbell's forces all working together. The weather is a bit finer, but we have had heavy showers. Trekked out, but found no enemy. I and my company were sent out to occupy a high ridge, which was actually over the border in Swaziland. We proceeded very cautiously, but found all clear. I had a Colt gun with me. Got into helio communication with Smith-Dorrien's pickets eight miles north-east of me. He reported 'No enemy.' Evidently all have decamped towards Piet Retief, where French will get them. The Swazis are a fine race, and were very glad to see us. They hate the Boers. Three days ago they actually had a fight with a Boer commando which had crossed the frontier, and they drove them out.

All returned back to camp at 7. Horses very done. I lost six, owing to their being worn out from lack of

forage. I was unable to get mealies for them to-day, sad to say.

February 20.—Rained like blazes all night. Reveille at 5. Turned out all horses grazing. Twenty-five of my men went on patrol to-day to Piet Retief, under Nye. All others remained in camp. Weather fine, but very showery. Eighteen Boers came in and surrendered to-day. The doctor came in yesterday with the remains of poor Major Howard and his orderly. They were near camp while we were away. It is still raining. I hear that 500 Boers have surrendered to French. I lost six horses again to-day from exposure and exhaustion.

February 21.—It rained all night. The ground is a swamp. There are no rations at all to-day for man or beast, except plenty of meat and grazing for horses. The convoy is not expected in till the evening of the 23rd instant. Turned out horses grazing. Sent out foraging parties in all directions for mealies, flour, sugar, salt, coffee, and whatever they can get. It is still raining; there is not a dry thing in the camp. All right, however, as it hardens one, and one always has the comforting thought of good times to come. The duties are pretty heavy, as six of our officers are sick: Adjutant MacLean; Captain Whylock, No. 3 Company; Gledhill, No. 4 Company; Campbell, No. 4 Company; Hext, No. 3 Company; Captain King, No. 2 Company. I am personally fit and well, and going strong.

At 4.30 I turned out with my company for outpost to ridge and cross-roads (Piet Retief) two miles south of camp. It is raining hard still. I posted my groups. Spent a wet, cheerless night. To improve matters we came in for a heavy thunderstorm at 10 o'clock. All this is a great hardship for the men, who have nothing to eat. It is too wet to cook meat. I curled myself under a wet blanket and smoked and smoked and smoked. Well, all things have an ending, and ultimately, at 4.45, came the gray dawn, but bringing with it more

rain. I had previously stood to arms at 3 a.m. It was a desolate enough scene: the gray sky, the sodden veldt, the cross-roads full of water reflecting the sad light of a dreary dawn, the tired men, and the poor starved horses; a few score of yards to our left a broken-down waggon, and with it all the unceasing rain.

Relieved at 6 a.m. by the vedette post, and returned to camp. No rations for the men, no forage for the horses!

February 22.—Still raining. Remained in camp all day. No news, except that our convoy of supplies is delayed at Luneberg owing to the flooding of the drifts and the heavy rains. This is rather depressing news. Turned in at 10. Raining hard.

February 23.—Reveille at 5. The weather looks like clearing, thank Heaven! I managed to get a bit of forage for the horses and mealy meal for the men. I have a lot to do just now to keep the men cheerful under very depressing circumstances, and to coax them to do their duties, which are very heavy. A large proportion of my company are mere boys, and a kind word goes a long way—further than threats and punishments. Tommy has many faults, but he is all right all the same, and I like him! I sent out foraging parties again to get grub and mealies for the company. The weather is becoming fine, so everybody's spirits are rising. At 2 we shifted camp about half a mile west; good move this! It is now a lovely evening with a glorious sunset, also a new moon. Hope it brings us all good luck! I do think the last week has been the hardest week I have undergone during the war—taking in the responsibility of the whole company and the horses. I had a very jolly and welcome dinner at 7, and turned in at 9.

February 24.—By the way, although we are within three miles of Derby, our actual camp is at Roodeplat.

Reveille at 4.45. Inspected horses and rifles. Sent horses grazing at 7. Church parade at 10. By the

way, the Rev. Mr. Mercer (missionary from Swaziland) took the service. He is a refugee in our camp, with his wife and family, as the Boers have compelled him to quit his place. It was very welcome having Divine service again. For the first time the prayers were for His Majesty King Edward VII., and for the first time we all said 'God save the King!' at the end of the service. A most lovely day. In the afternoon we invited Mr. Mercer and his wife to tea. She is a most interesting woman. She has been out here since 1872, and is the daughter of a staff-officer (she was a Miss Pitt-Dean), and seems to be a pretty courageous woman, too. When we appeared here the Boers threatened her and her husband, and also threatened to shoot off all the Christian Kaffirs. What do you think she did? She sent a message to the Queen Regent of Swaziland for an impi. She got it, too, and kept them to guard her house. The Swazis hate the Boers, and would give anything to go for them. Turned in at 10.

February 25.—General French has sent a message that he is very pleased with the work General Alderson has done in the way of clearing up the country.

Reveille at 5 a.m. Half my company furnished vedettes on outpost; otherwise only the usual camp duties. A beautiful day. I managed to get two days' supplies of mealy meal for the men—¾ lb. per head.

February 26.—Reveille at 4.45; breakfast at 7. Went out for the day foraging with Warnford, of the 44th Goorkhas (No. 3 Company). Took four men with me and three led horses. We started at 10. Went south-south-west. Had a fairly successful day, and got 40 lb. flour, 60 lb. potatoes, 30 lb. peaches, one sack green figs, 20 lemons, 8 chickens, 10 ducks, 4 wild geese (which we shot), 20 eggs, 200 lb. mealies, and 100 lb. bran. We visited about twenty kraals and eight farms, and returned to camp to dinner at 7.

February 27.—Reveille at 4.35. There is a thick white mist, and very wet. At 7.30, all of a sudden,

the whole mist rolled away. There was a startling transformation; everything became clear, with a cloudless blue sky and a brilliant sun, all the more wonderful by its suddenness—a morning to make one feel what a glorious thing it is to be alive.

Successes of all columns co-operating: Boers killed and wounded, 292; Boers captured, 363; cannon, including Maxim, 4; rifles, 606; ammunition (small-arm), 170,000 rounds; horses and mules, 7,000; trek oxen, 5,000; other oxen, 20,000; sheep, 160,000; waggons and carts, 1,700; mealies and oat-hay, 500,000 bushels.

At 9 a.m. Colonel Campbell's column passed through here *en route* to Piet Retief. General Smith-Dorrien's column is just behind.

The usual camp duties. At 2 p.m. the advanced guard of Smith-Dorrien's column passed through our camp. His force consists of three infantry battalions, 3rd Mounted Infantry, 2nd Imperial Light Horse, one naval 12-pounder, one 5-inch gun, 5th Irish Lancers, 84th Field Battery, 16th Field Battery, and two pom-poms.

As the Colonel of the 5th Lancers rode by I asked him one or two things, and finally asked him to our mess, which was just close by. He came in and had an interesting chat.

Our latest news: Smith-Dorrien goes to Derby. The Boers have all trekked south, along the Swaziland border towards Vryheid. French and all columns are going after them, and hope ultimately to round them up near Zululand and Natal. Allenby's column and Knox's column are at Piet Retief, Dartnell's column at Luneberg. We shall all probably trek to Marienthal. Lieutenant-General French is in full command of all forces operating in the Eastern Transvaal.

At 4 p.m. I and my company went on outpost duty to north of camp. Put out all my posts. A brilliant moonlight night. All quiet. Stood to arms at 3.30. A thick white mist.

February 28.—Returned to camp at 6 a.m.; orders to move at 9 a.m. Moved at 9 a.m. due south to Piet Retief. My company supplied right, left, and rear guard.

At 10.30 a.m. Sergeant Mucock, in command of my rearguard, sent up to me to report that he was fired upon by Boers at close quarters, and that one man in 13th Mounted Infantry was shot.

I rode back at once, taking Hilton and twenty-five men in support. Rode back to rearguard and took up position on a ridge, keeping the horses behind Kaffir kraals. Sent Hilton to cover my left rear (due north) on another ridge. Spotted our enemy trekking off from farm 800 yards north-east. Opened fire, and got two Boers, both killed. Hilton also opened fire. The Boers were 200 to 300 strong. Remained here three hours, keeping up fire, until the column got fairly well away. Hilton did good work on left rear. Retired on main column by sections alternately. Although under fire all the time we had no casualties, except two horses.

Marched back on main column, and reached Piet Retief at 6 p.m.

A big camp, about 20,000 troops: French's column, Allenby's column, Knox's column, Alderson's column, Campbell's column, Smith-Dorrien's column.

We are under orders to proceed to Marienthal tomorrow, my company to be escort to scouts. We lost six horses to-day. No forage or rations. All the troops are in the same boat. The convoys with supplies have been stopped by the flooding of the river.

A wonderful sight seeing a big camp again; it reminds one of old times.

March 1.—Piet Retief. Reveille at 5 a.m.; marched off due south at 7.30 for Marienthal. To-day my company was support to scouts. At 8.30 crossed Assegani River in flood. It is curious to watch the animals crossing the drift—horses up to their girths and almost carried away by the stream. We had a long, un-

eventful march through a tremendously rugged country, strong kopjes, road strewn with dead carcasses of horses, oxen, and mules, bare veldt, and in the distance to south-east the mighty spurs of the Drakensberg, 5,000 feet high. Reached Marienthal—a collection of houses burnt down—at 5.30 p.m., right at the top of a high ridge. It was a desolate scene, this site of a recent camp of Allenby's and of a recent fight. Here and there were a few graves with wooden crosses, some broken-down waggons, and dead animals. General Alderson had an interview with General Dartnell here to-day. By the way, Pulteney's, Allenby's, Knox's, Campbell's, French's, and Smith-Dorrien's columns were all at Piet Retief yesterday. Dartnell's column is close to this. Convoys are coming in one after another from Intombi, eight miles south.

The road we came by was so bad that no waggons are expected in to-night, so there is no food for anybody. It is raining hard—thunderstorms. Spent a fairly miserable night.

March 2.—Marienthal. Turned out at 4. All wet through! Every available man in camp sent out to help the waggons along. I had four men left to look after horses of my company, and I worked like a nigger all day with them. There was no food for anybody. Boone and his company rejoined to-day from Intombi (convoy escort duty). General Burn-Murdoch is guarding lines of communication between Newcastle and Intombi, where all convoys come from. One thousand five hundred infantry, of which my regiment supplied 400, are escorting convoys from Newcastle to Intombi.

I hear from some of my sick men, who are rejoining me to-day, that MacLean, our Adjutant, has been thrown from his horse and is in hospital. Major Savile is in command of the 400 Middlesex men coming up with the convoy. I also heard that Kitchener is in communication with Botha *re* unconditional surrender. It may possibly come off. At 5 to-night some waggons

came in. They were very welcome! Part of convoy for us came in also; so two days' rations were served out, the first food for us all for thirty-six hours. Very, very welcome! Hilton and Waters return to my company for duty. Smith becomes battalion quarter-master.

We have lost thirty-six horses; it has been a pretty stiff time, in fact, the horses are absolutely done. We lost fifteen to-day; I shot seven myself. Awful! However, I have got twelve new remounts from convoy. There are very heavy duties, too, in the way of outposts; one-third of the force is always on outpost. The country is rugged and difficult.

March 3.—Turned out at 5. Thirteenth and 14th Mounted Infantry, with pom-pom and two Colt guns, went out at 7 to make a demonstration in force towards Piet Retief to cover two convoys. On going out I was main body. It was a lovely day. We went out twelve miles, finding the country all clear. On our return I furnished right, left flank, and rear guard. The horses are utterly worn out; I lost twelve again to-day. I returned to camp at 8 o'clock, very tired; we must have done thirty to forty miles to-day. Farms all cleared by Pulteney's force. We officers are living on half-rations now, just like the men, our stores having given out altogether.

March 4.—Reveille at 5; breakfast at 7. Two new subalterns have joined us from the Devons at Lydenburg—Maxwell and Kayne—both very decent fellows. At 8.30 we shifted camp just a mile south-south-west on some cleaner ground. To-day I caught four fairly good horses in a kraal, all wild.

March 5.—Turned out at 3, as I had orders to send out twenty-five men and an officer as escort to convoys going to Piet Retief. Sent Hilton. Waters and his section have gone on permanent outpost for some days. I shall probably remain here for a week or ten days and await supplies, etc. This is a cold, misty day, with fine drizzling rain. Very heavy duties all round. One o'clock, raining hard. Usual duties. Dinner, or

I should say half-rations, at 7. Turned in at 10. Very wet and damp.

March 6.—Rained hard all night. Turned out at 5. Usual camp duties. Good news to-day: De Wet utterly broken up and Louis Botha making terms of surrender at Middelburg. Hilton's party returned safe and sound. It is still raining like blazes. Amongst my duties every day is to tell off the prisoners, which is always unpleasant. Marienthal is a little German colony, and has a small church. All the country round is very broken and hilly. To the south-west are the towering Verzamelsberg and Ilangaapiesberg; but we can't see much, as everything is covered in clouds. Still, the scenery is very beautiful, even covered in by gray clouds.

March 7.—Turned out at 5. Fed horses. At 9 took out reconnoitring patrol of twenty men to patrol round hills towards Piet Retief. It is still raining. The country seems all clear. I went to a German farm, and had a very good lunch of fresh bread and butter and coffee. So welcome! I got a beautiful American buggy, which will come in useful for me, as mine has broken down; it is brand new, and beautifully light. I got a set of harness as well. Two convoys passed in. All the roads and country are a regular swamp. The rainy season on the eastern side of the big watershed is totally different to the rainy season on the western side. Here we get everlasting rain and mists; on the western side one gets a succession of thunderstorms, with very heavy showers and intermittent sunshine. If you look at the map you will notice that it is the two effects of the near contact of the Pacific Ocean on the eastern side and the further effect of the contact of the Atlantic Ocean on the western side. Returned at 6. Usual camp duties. Rode out to my section (Waters) on outpost. Raining hard. Everything soaked.

March 9.—Turned out at 4. A glorious morning: clear sky, brilliant sunrise, a marvellous change, and

very welcome to all. I find no duties to-day, so my men will get a well-deserved rest. I took an opportunity to send in my report for saddlery, arms, and equipment worn out on service for the Board of Inquiry to be held to-morrow. A glorious hot day. Usual camp duties.

Sunday, March 10.—Rained heavily all night. Turned out at 4. A wet, dirty morning. Two of my sections ordered out for convoy patrols. Sent 1 and 2, under Hilton and Waters respectively. The Canadians had a brush with the enemy to-day five miles from camp, and lost two men and six horses. They had to retire. It rained hard all day.

March 11.—Turned out at 4. Usual camp duties. The horses are in a very bad way, owing to having had no forage for four days. Still raining—awful weather! All of us, too, are on half-rations. I rode round the outposts in the afternoon. Attended Board of Inquiry to-day under Captain Dick, 13th Mounted Infantry, to write off saddlery and equipment lost on service.

March 12.—Turned out at 4. Sent horses out grazing. It is still raining, with a thick white mist. My work is not over easy just now to manage the company. I have about forty recruits, who have never been near their regiment, never had a barrack-room training, and don't know what discipline means. To compensate for this, the remaining 100 men are first-rate soldiers. It is hard times for the men, but, I think, harder still for the officers. It is still raining. I rode round the outposts.

March 13.—Turned out at 4.40; most lovely morning. Sent horses out grazing. Still no forage. At 8 went out on a reconnoitring expedition under Colonel Barter (King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry). Force: 20 Canadians, two guns J Battery, 100 Mounted Infantry (14th), 200 Infantry (King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry).

I had not proceeded one and a half miles before a heavy mist sprang up, with a drizzling rain. As one

could not see 300 yards, we had orders to return to camp. It cleared up at 10.30. I went out at 11, and trekked six miles west towards the Ilangaapiesberg. I and my section (thirty men) held the extreme left or south flank. All clear. Sent in 300 sheep. Uninteresting day. Got back to camp at 7. No Boers seen.

March 14.—Turned out at 5; a most lovely morning, with bright sunshine. At last there is a welcome change in the weather! Sent horses out grazing; there is still no forage for them, except what they get grazing, and only half-rations for men; plenty of meat, however. Hilton and No. 1 Section of my company went out on outpost to-day. I spent most of the day lassoing and catching horses for the company at a kraal. I caught nine, amongst which were a beautiful Basuto mare and foal, which I am keeping myself. It took me an hour to get on her, and she took one minute in getting me off. However, I got on again, and rode her for three hours, which quieted her down a bit.

March 15.—Turned out at 5. Sent horses grazing. No forage yet for horses, and half-rations for men. A showery day, with thunderstorms. I rode my new mare again to-day, otherwise there is nothing to relate, except that horses are dying at the rate of twenty a day in the Brigade from starvation.

March 16.—Turned out at 5. Sent horses grazing. Fine, but showery. Orders to move to-morrow at 9. How we shall get along I don't know, with starved horses and half-starved men. Rained all night. Lovely!

March 17.—Sunday. Reveille at 4. Sent out horses grazing at 5. Started off south-south-east of Paul Pietersdorp at 9. We furnish rearguard and flank guards. This is a beautiful country, but very difficult. Part of the road was down the side of an enormous hill, with the hill on one side and a sheer drop of 150 feet on the other; it was only 10 feet wide, and

covered in rocks. Descent about 1 in 15 inches. I don't expect the waggons will reach us to-night. We halted and camped at Vredegunst at 2 p.m. Waited for waggons, but only a few came in. Luckily my cart arrived. There are no rations to-night, but Brass, our mess president (one of the best), managed to give us an excellent meal of mutton and mealies. Rearguard still out, also Hilton. Marched seven miles to-day.

March 18.—Vredegunst. It rained hard again last night, with heavy thunderstorms. Reveille at 4; sent horses grazing at 5. Several waggons were overturned and smashed up, and we lost eight horses yesterday. The waggons are now coming in by dozens. A beautiful clear morning. Remained in camp till 1. Rearguard and remainder of waggons not in yet. Orders to move at noon for mounted troops only; remainder to come on at 1. All the horses are dead-tired and done. Marched seven miles on foot; then halted, and camped just north of Pongola River, at Jagdt's Drift, arriving at 4 p.m. Heavy rain and thunderstorm. Directly we got into camp I and my company had to go on outpost duty three miles east of camp, on high ridge. We had no food, and it was raining hard. I put my post near a Kaffir kraal; got men to make a large bonfire, and killed two calves and a pig. Commandeered 250 lb. mealies for the horses (first food they have had for some time), and a sack of ground Kaffir corn, which made excellent chupatties.

It rained all night, which effectually stopped anybody who had any intentions of so doing from sleeping. I spent the night patrolling. There is a Boer picket six miles east of us. Dartnell's camp is seven miles north of Pongola River.

March 19.—Jagdt's Drift, Pongola River. Stood to arms at 3.30. A wretchedly wet morning, wretched horses, and wretched men! Relieved at 6 a.m. by a vedette. Returned to camp. No move to-day, as the Engineers are building a pontoon bridge over the Pongola, which is in flood, and quite 40 yards wide,

besides having an extremely rapid current. This is a magnificent, broken country.

The kraal I stayed at last night belonged to a Zulu named Umtungla, one of the finest specimens of a man I have ever seen. He stood 6 feet 5 inches to 6 feet 6 inches, perfectly proportioned, with muscles like a Hercules, and a fine face, too. I felt quite small beside him. Had a long 'pow-wow' with him. Still raining. In the afternoon I walked down to the river, and watched the Royal Engineers building the pontoon bridge and making approaches. It was most interesting. The current is extremely rapid—seven and a half to eight miles an hour.

March 20.—Reveille at 5. The column started, moving across the river at 9. All went well, except for two mules and one ox, which strayed overboard and got drowned. A fine day. Halted and camped on high ground one mile north of river.

March 22.—French's, Allenby's, Knox's, and Pulteney's columns arrived here to-day; the two former are camping south and the two latter north of us. Orders to move to-morrow.

March 23.—Reveille at 4; marched off south at 5, past Allenby's and Knox's columns. Halted and camped at Paul Pietersdorp. Dartnell's column is here; we wait for him to move on. Heavy firing about ten or fifteen miles south heard between 1 and 3 p.m.

March 24.—Reveille at 4; marched off south at 6. Country very rugged, with difficult roads. We had a long march of nine miles, with many long halts to allow the waggons to close up. Dartnell's column is immediately in front of us. We halted and camped at Velgenvonden, twelve miles north of Vryheid. The waggons were late coming in. Waters and No. 2 Section went out on permanent outpost. We halt here for three or four days in order to get supplies, etc. We are all on quarter rations still. It is hungry work. No tobacco either. The farms have been burnt everywhere by other columns.

March 25.—Velgenvonden. Reveille at 5. Warnford and seventy men—No. 3 and 4 Companies—proceeded to Vryheid at 4 a.m. with empty waggons to bring out mails and supplies. I sent my servant and cart in to buy stores for the company. In the afternoon I rode out and saw Waters' outpost.

March 26.—Reveille at 5. Stables. Glad to say we are getting forage for the horses now—10 lb. oats per day, which is very good. It will fill them up a bit. French left us these. Yesterday I drew twenty-four remounts for the company from the 10th Hussars—not a bad lot, on the whole. A convoy with ten days' supplies came back from Vryheid late this afternoon, bringing thirty remounts as well, which went to No. 1 Company. We also received six weeks' mails.

March 27.—Reveille at 5. Beautifully fine. The column moved off at 7 due east. I find flank and rear guards. Had a long march of fifteen miles over extremely difficult country, with many halts to allow the waggons to cross drifts. The Canadian Scouts exchanged shots with a few Boer snipers, and J Battery shelled a small commando of between 200 and 300, who were returning north-east. Casualties: One Boer killed, two wounded, two prisoners; ours nil. We camped on a high ridge immediately north of Manwaan River (tributary of the Bevaan and Usutu Rivers). A very stiff drift; the waggons did not get in till between 11 and midnight. A fine moonlight night. Turned in at one.

March 28.—Express Farm. Reveille at 4.30. Mounted troops, under Colonel Jenner, moved off east at 6. Waggon and infantry follow later on. It was a most beautiful morning, with the rising sun playing on the mists and clouds amongst the mountains, but the country is extraordinarily difficult—a shockingly bad road, and a succession of drifts and ridges; in places it was extremely perilous. In pursuit of retreating Boers, waggons, and oxen, we marched ten miles, then halted at 1 p.m. on a high crest overlooking

the country. At 3 p.m. I and my company were sent to reconnoitre two valleys due south, to clear all opposition, and to sweep in oxen. We had an exciting ride across country—rivers, ravines, and passes—and went through both valleys. No Boers! However, we got 100 head of oxen. Rejoined main body at 5 on their return to camp. Waggons are up; marvellous that they ever got up here! Four of them rolled down a precipice, oxen and all, and were utterly smashed up. I am glad to say that my own company, waggons and private cart are still intact. It is a hot fine day.

March 29.—Pietersrust. Reveille at 4.30; marched off at 6. Hot, close morning. To-day we are main body. Marched due east. At cross-roads at Bellevue my company and Brass's (No. 1) took the north road over the mountains and covered the left flank. We marched till 1, then halted, according to orders, on the edge of the ridge. Hilton collared a Boer, and exchanged a few shots with some snipers. Louis Botha's farm is about six miles east. Halted till four. A heavy thunderstorm. I moved back to rejoin main body at five. A fine ride by brilliant moonlight through a valley covered with trees, where a river meandered in and out. On both sides were a succession of huge ridges covered with white rock, which fairly gleamed in the moonlight against a dark indigo-blue sky. Wonderful! We reached camp at 8, turned in at 10.

March 30.—Kruysfontein. Reveille at 4.30. Stood by, as we had to wait for the Royal Engineers to make the road good and the many drifts crossable. The country is getting wilder and stiffer every day. I started at 8 up, or, I should say, east, along the valley. We had many halts. We marched only six miles, and camped close to Louis Botha's farm. I supported scouts. No enemy! All my company are out on outpost. A quiet night.

March 31.—Waterval. Reveille at 4. A cold, fine morning. Moved off main road; column covered its left flank, and moved through Botha's farm, a fine

place. Emmett's farm is close by. We halted at 8 a.m. on a ridge east of Botha's farm. Heard heavy firing to north-east—Dartnell's column in action against 800 to 1,000 Boers, strongly posted with machine-guns and pom-pom. Orders for all mounted troops to leave waggons and co-operate with Dartnell's column, taking three days' half-rations for man and horse.

The force consists of: 4 guns J Battery, 5 Colt guns, Canadians, 13th Mounted Infantry, 14th Mounted Infantry (under Colonel Jenner).

Moved off at 2.30 p.m. north-east. A tremendously stiff, mountainous country. We marched on till 9 p.m., about ten miles, and halted and camped by Smaldeel Farm. Welcome grub!

April 1.—Smaldeel Farm. Reveille at 4; breakfast at 5; marched off at 5.15. To-day we are support to scouts. Fine, but misty. A mighty country this, and very beautiful. At 8 a.m. we reached a big farm and captured 10 prisoners, 8 waggons, 100 horses, 1,000 oxen, and 2,000 sheep. Halted here. Boers and their waggons believed to be three days' march east and south-east. Moved on and turned north after Dartnell. Between 300 and 400 Boers seen on our left flank trekking back. The whole force turned about to intercept them. I got 200 oxen and 500 sheep on our march back. Halted and camped at 7.30. It is a fine, moonlight night.

April 2.—Reveille at 4; breakfast at 5; started at 5.30 due north. Pratt took in carts, waggons, and all sick horses. Colonel Jenner is in command. We go to round up cattle and waggons. We went four and a half miles through the stiffest country imaginable. Halted on a huge razor-edged ridge, with a 2,000 feet drop on either side. The Canadians, under Ross, and 13th Mounted Infantry went on to raid cattle. There was a desultory sniping all round. The Boers retired, leaving a huge head of oxen. Ultimately captured six waggons, 400 to 500 oxen, and 300 horses. My company and Brass's (No. 1 Company) halted here for the

night on outpost, and also to prevent cattle from straying. It rained all night. I spent an exciting night keeping the cattle together, and keeping the *Z*ulus from trekking cattle off. Very tired! Colonel Jenner hugely delighted with his haul. The Canadians are here as well.

April 3.—Hilly country north-north-east of Waterval. Stood to arms at 3.30. Moved off as rearguard at 6. It was fairly fine. We moved back due south; it was a long, tedious trek, with many halts. I had great difficulty with two captured ox-waggons with new teams of oxen; could not get them up a long, steep hill. At last I took the responsibility myself, and burnt one waggon, putting the two teams in the other; this proved successful. Arrived at Waterval at 2 p.m., and found the camp had shifted and was on the move towards Vryheid. Trekked on through Botha's farm, and reached camp at 6 p.m., very tired. We lost six horses to-day.

April 4.—Vaalbank. Reveille at 5. A most beautiful morning, with a wonderful sunrise. Pratt and Nye, with forty men, took cattle on to Vryheid. We moved off due south-south-west at 9 along the fine road to Vryheid. We halted and camped at 1, having marched nine miles. A heavy thunderstorm during dinner; all got soaking wet.

April 5.—Nooitgedacht. Reveille at 5. Remained here for the day, with only the usual camp duties. Rode with Brass into Vryheid and bought stores; a most enjoyable ride, and quite a holiday to be off duty. Had lunch in Vryheid. Brass and No. 1 Company got immediate orders to ride off at 8 p.m. to four miles west of Vryheid and intercept a party of Boers known to be there. Nos. 2 and 4 Companies are under orders to proceed with convoy and supplies at 5 a.m. tomorrow for Dartnell. Brass is now Commanding Officer; he is a Captain, and comes from the East Yorks Regiment. I hear this evening that Micky Furlong, of the Middlesex Regiment, was killed whilst

scouting near Vryheid. He was with the Middlesex Company Mounted Infantry, belonging to Utrecht district. I am very sorry, as he was a real good fellow and a promising soldier. A very busy evening. Turned in at 11.

April 6.—Moved off north as escort to convoy and supplies for General Dartnell's column. Boone was in command of the 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 2 and 4 Companies). It was a most beautiful day; I and my company had charge of the right flank. We halted and camped at Vaalbank at 1 o'clock, having marched eight miles. Here we met Dartnell's column.

April 7.—Vaalbank. We started back for Vryheid to join the main column at 6.30, taking with us empty waggons, Boer prisoners, and women. I was left flank guard. We halted at Nooitgedacht for three hours, and outspanned. A beautiful day. We started at 3 for Vryheid, and reaching here at 6.30, found Alderson's column had gone north. Halted and camped for the night. Vryheid is the usual type of Dutch town out here; beautifully situated in a valley, with high ridges all round. It has about 3,000 inhabitants.

April 8.—Vryheid. Reveille at 4; trekked off at 5.30 south-west to join main column. To-day I furnish right flank and rear guards. Hilton rode on with despatches from General French to Alderson. Marched nine miles and joined main column at 1.30 a.m. Hot weather. We have orders to move to-morrow.

April 9.—Brakfontein. Reveille at 4; column trekked south-south-east at 5.30. Warnford took two companies on extreme right flank (exposed), of which my company was one. I furnished advanced guard and scouts. A hot day, and an uneventful march, but a fine country! The column itself marched nine miles, then halted, and camped at a big conical hill called Spitzkop. We did not get in till five, after we had done a big flanking movement of about twenty-five miles. I got 300 head of oxen to-day.

April 10.—Spitzkop. Reveille at 3.30. Colonel

Jenner took out a mounted force on extreme right to round up from 400 to 600 Boers reported to be in the hills, and to bring in cattle. My company went with this force. The main column went on east-north-east.

The force under Colonel Jenner was as follows: Two squadrons 8th Hussars; two 15-pound guns G Battery R.H.A.; two Colt guns (Canadians); French's Scouts; 100 14th Mounted Infantry.

We moved off at 5.30, east-south-east, towards a whale-backed hill. There was a lovely sunrise. We trekked on till 8.30, without any special incident occurring. I was then sent across the Umvelosi River, on extreme right, to get round two ridges running parallel and three to five miles off the right flank. It was rather exciting getting across the river, which is 100 yards wide and quite 5 to 6 feet deep in the centre. However, we all partly scrambled and swam across on our horses. We then went on; no enemy! We rejoined main body at 9. It was fine weather, though a gale was blowing. We proceeded. At 10 a.m. French's Scouts came in contact with between thirty and fifty Boers well posted on a ridge on left front, which was covered with a fringe of trees, with a mealy patch behind. There was brisk firing on both sides, and the 8th Hussars were sent up to reinforce. Boone took thirty men and held on our right flank front. The Colt guns started on front left and the G guns sent in a few shells. At 11 all moved on to the ridge and found the Boers scattered and gone. This is our destination. We halted till 2, then we returned to camp at Nooitgedacht. I had charge of left flank, and got back to camp at 6. Covered to-day quite forty miles. Very tired!

April 11.—Nooitgedacht. Reveille at 5. Breakfast at 5.30. Moved off at 6.45 to Vryheid. The country is pretty stiff again for trekking. This is a cold, windy day, the first touch of coming winter. We halted and camped at Vaalkranz Nek in the Helbone Mountains. We marched fourteen miles to-day. The advanced

guard of the 8th Hussars came into touch with between twelve and twenty Boers sniping on the Nek, and after exchanging a few shots with them drove them out. Hilton and part of the company are on outpost to-night. A cold wind.

April 12.—Vaalkranz Nek. Reveille at 3.30. Moved off at 5, and trekked north towards Vryheid. The column had to cross a vlei and a very stiff drift, then to do a long climb of 1,200 feet. We had many halts, and there was sniping all along the pass. It was a most awkward place to cross; had it been held by 1,000 Boers well posted it would have been pretty well impregnable. We had a long, tiring march, with many halts and many seizings of ridges to counteract possible attack; ultimately we halted and camped at Vaalkranz at 7, after having marched fifteen miles. King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry still out looking after the waggons coming in. Our camp is close to where we met Dartnell the other day.

April 13.—Vaalkranz. Reveille at 3; moved off at 3.45 for Vryheid by moonlight. King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry had already trekked off under Colonel Barter at 1 a.m. We marched fourteen miles, and reached Vryheid at 9 a.m. A welcome breakfast at 10. We moved off again at 3, halted and camped three miles south of Vryheid on Dundee Road.

April 14.—Three miles south of Vryheid. Reveille at 4; marched off at 6 *en route* for Dundee. We reach Dundee the day after to-morrow, and then entrain for Pretoria to get new horses, refit, etc., for another expedition.

Well, this finishes a trek which is the longest consecutive one I have done. Although there has not been much fighting, it has been far and away the hardest time the troops have had, owing to unprecedentedly heavy rains for this country and a scarcity of food. I believe the whole move in conjunction with the other columns has been distinctly successful. The only matter of regret is that there is so little fighting,

as the Boers won't stand. You will see by the map what an enormous distance we have covered, from Pretoria to Dundee in one trek. I am pleased to say that my company is going very strong again, and if I have the good luck to remain in command I hope to make it a first-rate company, especially when we get refitted with new saddlery and horses. We all want a fortnight's rest before we go on again.

Trek under General Bullock, No. 2 Company 14th Mounted Infantry, Field Forces, Fifth Corps, South Africa.

Before going further I should like to tell you a few things about the last trek. The regiment came back with 130 mounted men on fit horses out of 500, the remainder being dismounted. Two-thirds of the men were absolutely in rags, and quite a fourth were bootless. This will explain to you what a severe trek it was. Well, we hope to get a three weeks' rest now, and during that time we shall refit all round.

April 18.—Dundee. Trained for Newcastle at 1.30 p.m., arriving here at 7; just had a scratch dinner, and settled down for the night on the veldt. We have lovely hot days now, but very cold nights.

April 19.—Newcastle. We are back once again to familiar country, and at the foot of the mighty Drakensberg, encamped one mile west of the town. The Middlesex Regiment are all at Utrecht, thirty miles east of Newcastle. Settled down to camp; usual duties. I went into the town and bought some very necessary clothing, etc.; returned to camp at 1 and had lunch, then paid the company £500.

April 20.—Captain King joined us to-day with all the mounted men and our transport. King gone to No. 1 Company, so I remain in command of No. 2, which is most satisfactory. Gretton, Kayne, and Waters go down to Durban for a leave.

April 21.—Usual parade.

April 22.—Reveille at 6. J Battery and No. 1 Section of G Battery came into camp to-day. Warnford, Brass, and I went into the town and had a most enjoyable dinner at the station; it was literally the first civilized meal I have had since Pretoria last January. Returned at 9 to camp.

April 23.—Turned out at 5. Had my cart overhauled and repaired to-day ready for another long trek.

April 24.—Turned out at 6. Major Bridgeford (1st Manchesters) arrived to-day, and took over the command of the battalion. He is an old Mounted Infantry officer, and has done well in Natal and Lydenburg. This morning I sat on a Board for loss of kit, saddlery, etc., on service by 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry. This Board lasted all day, and was very tedious work.

April 25.—Drew equipment and saddlery and 100 horses for the company. This is the best lot of horses I have ever seen—Americans and Hungarians, about 14.2, 15, and 15.2 to 16.1 hands. Considerable changes are in progress. Lieutenant Cooke, of the Rifle Brigade, comes to No. 2 (my company), and takes command *pro tem.* till Captain Brindley (an old Mounted Infantry officer) arrives. I go to No. 1 Company (Captain Brass). Lieutenant Vassil and fifty men (Gloucesters) arrived to-day also, and a new company is formed of Gloucesters only.

Whole battalion rearranged as follows: No. 1 Company: East Yorks, 120 men (Captain Brass, Lieutenant Moeller). No. 2 Company, Middlesex, Hilton; Lancashire Fusiliers, Gledhill; 1st and 2nd Manchesters, Cooke (Captain Brindley). No. 3 Company: Essex, Boone; Devons, Maxwell and Kayne; West Yorks, Fryer (Lieutenant Warnford). No. 4 Company: Gloucesters, Lieutenant Nye, Lieutenant Hamilton (Lieutenant Vassil).

April 26.—Turned out at 5. To-day I am orderly officer, with plenty to do. Served out saddlery and

equipment to No. 1 Company. I am sorry to say my servant Greenhead, who has done me so well, went sick to-day, having received a kick in the mouth from his horse. I have drawn five lovely horses, one for my groom and one for my servant. Tommy and Kitty are in my Cape-cart. Tommy, you know, is the old veteran who has carried me so well and got shot at Rietfontein. Visited posts twice during the night. That wretched horse-sickness is very bad here.

April 27.—Turned out at 5. Our company being the first to be equipped, proceeded by road to Volksrust at 8. No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry (Captain Brass); 13th Mounted Infantry (Major Pratt); J Battery R.H.A. (Major Ducrot). A lovely day. We passed familiar places—Windsor Castle, Umbana, Sikafu. Marched twelve miles and halted and camped at Ingogo. No. 2 Company, under Cooke, joined us here. One of the changes the present Commanding Officer has made is to turn the regimental mess into company messes; this is far more practicable and comfortable for all the officers. Our mess is only a small one. There is Brass, who is one of the best, myself, and King, of the Canadian Dragoons. I look after the mess. The waggons came in rather late, so we did not get dinner till 9. A wet night.

April 28.—Ingogo. Reveille at 5; moved off at 7, and marched through Laing's Nek and O'Neil's Farm. We passed at the foot of Majuba and Mount Prospect, through a most lovely country. It was a beautiful day, and I enjoyed the march immensely. We passed through Charlestown, and halted and camped north of Volksrust at 4 p.m. Headquarters and three or four companies joined us at 9, coming in by rail. There is now a big garrison here.

April 29.—Volksrust. Reveille at 5. I went into Volksrust to buy stores for the mess. We trekked off at 1. Our column is under Major-General Bullock (*vice* General Dartnell, who has gone down to Natal). The force was split in two columns as follows:

No. 1 Column: Thirteenth Mounted Infantry, 400 men, Major Pratt; 14th Mounted Infantry, 350 men, Major Bridgeford (Colonel Jenner); J Battery, R.H.A., 120 men, Major Ducrot; 2nd Dorsets, 800 men, Colonel Law; one pom-pom; Royal Engineers. All under General Bullock, and trekked east-north-east of Volksrust. No. 2 Column: Colonel Gough's Mounted Infantry, 600 men; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, 600 men; Commander-in-Chief's bodyguard, 1,000 men, Colonel Chesney; 74th Battery R.F.A., 120 men; 1 pom-pom. All under Colonel Bimbachi Stuart, and trekked on right flank east of Volksrust. The whole under General Bullock.

No. 1 Company furnished right and left flank and rear guards to column; I took left flank guard. It was a cold, fine day, the scenery very beautiful; we had only marched three miles when we halted and camped. Do you know that every evening we see a comet with two enormous tails? I saw it first on April 26 at Newcastle, in the east, at 5 a.m. King has become staff-officer or A.D.C. to Colonel Jenner, and messes with us.

April 30.—Hout Nek. Reveille at 5; trekked at 7 due north through the Nek. It was a fine, crisp, frosty morning. We marched with main body about eight miles, and halted and camped at 12 noon. We have eighteen days' supplies with us—an enormous convoy. The camp is always formed in laager formation—*i.e.*, waggons all round the camp.

May 1.—Land Spruit. Reveille at 5; marched off due north at 7 through Graskop Nek. Two companies of the 'Queen's' form a post on the Nek. The advanced guard got in touch with fifty Boers, who retired hastily after exchanging shots. We marched twelve miles, and halted and camped at Joubert's Farm. Stuart's column was in action on the right flank; had one officer wounded and seven men and twelve horses shot. Drove off the Boers—between 200 and 300—however. I slept on inlying picket.

May 2.—Joubert's Farm. Reveille at 1 a.m; marched off by moonlight at 3. Reconnaissance in force on left flank: 13th Mounted Infantry (Major Pratt); 14th Mounted Infantry (Major Bridgeford); J Battery R.H.A. (Major Ducrot); one pom-pom. All under Colonel Jenner, General Bullock accompanying the force.

A beautiful moonlight night, but very cold. First we marched west, then north, then north-east, arriving and halting at Amersfoort at 10 a.m. We only saw between 50 and 100 Boers some way off, who decamped. We joined the main body here at 12 noon. Stuart's force has been in action again with about 500 Boers on the right flank, and have captured eleven Boers and Commandant Schwartz. At 4 o'clock our outposts were sniped pretty freely, and the bodyguard had one man killed. All turned out; the Boers, however, bolted after receiving a pretty warm shelling.

May 3.—Amersfoort. Reveille at 5.30. Moved off at 7.30. Came in contact almost at once with a strong Boer force, who pom-pommed our advanced guard. Fourteenth Mounted Infantry were sent out on left flank, No. 4 Company (Gloucesters) scouting, followed by Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Companies. No. 4 came in touch with about 800 or 1,000 Boers strongly posted on a ridge six miles long running north and south, parallel with main column, and had to retire. The whole of 14th Mounted Infantry then moved north, well out of rifle range, and held a ridge. Major Bridgeford sent in for reinforcements. The Boers crept round both flanks; however, we kept them off. Nye, of the Gloucesters, was taken prisoner, but was released and sent back, after being deprived of everything except shirt, breeches, and boots. At 1 p.m. the 14th Mounted Infantry came out with four guns and battery, and at once proceeded to go for the Boer position; in the meantime guns shelled the ridge wall. The Boers decamped, leaving several wounded. Our casualties were only two. All retired at 3.30 p.m., 14th Mounted Infantry

covering retirement. We reached camp at 6.30 p.m. on a lovely moonlight night. Johannesburg Mounted Rifles fought a slight action on the right flank.

May 4.—Riet Spruit. Reveille at 3.30. We moved off at 5.30, 14th Infantry leading. I, with half No. 1 Company, was sent out on advanced right flank. I saw several parties of Boers along ridges five miles on my right, and had several little skirmishes with Boer vedettes and snipers. Moved on. Great surprises! The column got shelled and we got pom-pommed from Boer Creusot gun and pom-pom situated in ridge. We galloped for cover to ridge with Kaffir kraal, got horses under cover, and awaited events. Thirteenth Mounted Infantry and Brass, with remainder of the company, moved out. After a good deal of desultory firing the Boers evacuated, taking their guns with them. J Battery and 74th shelled the ridge thoroughly. I had orders to rejoin the battalion, which I did. The column halted; the 14th went forward with two guns (J Battery) and made a dash for the high ridge. It was an exciting ride; the Boers fired a few shots, and then bolted. We reached the ridge which overlooks Vaal River, and had a beautiful view. Thirteenth Mounted Infantry and two guns made a wide détour on extreme right. Then the column crossed the Vaal by Kaffir Drift, instead of over the bridge. We came into camp at 4.30 p.m. Hilton, of No. 2 Company, had a skirmish; on left flank were Gough's Mounted Infantry. He had two men wounded.

May 5.—Kaffir Drift, Vaal River. Reveille at 4.30; moved off at 6.30, 13th Mounted Infantry leading, 14th Mounted Infantry finding flank guards to convoy. I was right flank guard. There was a thick white mist at starting, and the column halted, but it cleared up at 7.30, and we saw 200 to 300 Boers on a high ridge north-east of us, and on our right front. Reported. Exchanged shots with Boer snipers. The column changed direction several times, moving east, north-east, north, and north-west, and being on the

outer flank, we had to keep on the trot the whole time. At 2 p.m. the column halted to allow the waggons to recross Vaal River at Vleiplaats. I joined Brass at 2 p.m., and formed line of outposts, still on right flank; our posts were constantly sniped at from several sides. At 4 p.m. I took out a strong reconnoitring patrol of thirty men, then extended and moved at trot; we saw Boers clearing off. I moved on, and was able from a good position to fire at five or six Boers, who galloped off. Unfortunately I had a man hit—Poole of the East Yorks—through shoulder and breast. I left a man with him, taking their rifles and bandoliers, and also sent in for doctor and ambulance. Rejoined Brass at 5, and all returned to camp. There has been skirmishing all round the column, the Boers being everywhere in small parties. Gough's Mounted Infantry and Johannesburg Mounted Rifles are out on extreme left, to get in touch with Colonel Hamilton's column. The Boers are estimated to be about 1,500 strong, and under the redoubtable Louis Botha. The comet was a marvellous sight to-night, having two distinct tails.

May 6.—Vleiplaats. Reveille at 2; breakfast at 3.15; moved off at 4. Special reconnoitring force to get in touch with Colonel Hamilton's column on extreme left at Blaauwkop on Vaal River. Force: 14th Battalion, one company advanced guard (No. 1), half-company left flank guard (No. 2); 13th Battalion, half-company right flank guard, half-company rearguard, half company escort guns; four guns J Battery R.H.A. (all under Colonel Jenner). Remainder of force moved with train column under General Officer Commanding. I furnished scouting line to advanced guard. It was a moonlight morning, followed by a glorious sunrise. All was quiet. We reached Vaalkop and Blaauwkop (two high kopjes and great landmarks for miles round) at 7 a.m. No enemy, except fifty or sixty Boers west of us, manœuvring about five miles off. No sign of Colonel Hamilton's column. There was a small

column fifteen miles west of us, who appeared to be having a skirmish with a small commando of Boers. A cloudy day, and very hard to get in helio touch with anybody. We also saw a big camp twelve or fifteen miles north-north-west towards Standerton. After some difficulty we got into helio communication, and it turned out to be Colonel Colville's column from Standerton. After hanging about for some hours, all returned to camp ten miles east. No. 1 Company rearguard. No enemy; all clear. Our main column were shelled to-day, and had a skirmish all round. We reached camp at 6 p.m.; a brilliant moonlight night, very cold and frosty. We are on outpost to-night.

May 7.—Twiefontein. Stood to arms at 3.30 a.m. The whole company were on outpost east of camp. A quiet night. The column moved north at 5; we were rearguard, and had to hold high ground east of camp till the last waggons were clear. At 5.30 I noticed ten Boers galloping round our rear; I opened fire on them at 1,300 yards, but could not hit one; however, I galloped on to my extreme easterly post, and got them to fire at 1,000 yards. In the meantime Brass heard the firing and brought up two sections. I sent for mine, and altogether we lined the ridge. Waters was sent to occupy a ridge on the right. Our ridge overlooked another ridge parallel and 1,800 yards off. It was most extraordinary; the Boers seemed to come in from all round, and before we knew where we were we came in for a stiff rearguard action. The Boers opened fire on us, and we replied. I am sorry to say Corporal Bates (East Yorks, one of my very best non-commissioned officers) got shot by a Martini bullet through the stomach; he was just by me. Poor chap! it was a terrible wound. I got him out of fire. Well, it is no duty of a rearguard to fight, so we retired alternately by sections from ridge to ridge, all the time keeping up a fighting front. The Boers were most persistent; it was an exciting time. I left Bates with

a man and took their horses, rifles, and bandoliers; at the same time I sent in for an ambulance. The whole morning we did nothing else but gallop from ridge to ridge, covering each other's retirement by dismounting and firing. The Boers followed us. Brass sent in for reinforcements and two guns. I had rather an exciting experience. I went over to Waters, who was on my left, to warn him about left rear; my saddle slipped, and I had to get off and put things straight. Well, as luck would have it, my horse would not stand; while I was getting the saddle on, some Boers had crept round and started firing on me from a ridge on my left rear. It was most exciting; bullets lammed about me like steam. At last I got my saddle on, jumped up, and was off like a shot, followed by a running fire. Never had such a hot time before! I then rejoined my half-company and thanked my stars neither I nor my horse was shot. Well, we all made for a farm, where we got cover. Two guns came up, and two companies 14th Mounted Infantry; there were quite 400 or 500 Boers occupying ridges all round rear of column. A general action all round followed; the Boers on nearer ridges decamped; both flank guards joined in, then all retired on column. The column marched twelve miles. Our column had to remain out until the last waggons were in. We got into camp at 5.30. Fighting continued all round column. The Boer gun and pom-pom shelled us, but always managed to get off, although the Mounted Infantry several times went for them. We had eight casualties to-day; the Boers had many, as they sent in for medical aid. Sloane (of J Battery) went into the Boer camp, and it was from him I heard that one Boer was shot early in the morning by our rearguard and had died. Poor Bates was brought in, but died at 7 to-night. The Boers here are the pick of the old force, and are under Louis Botha himself.

May 8.—Kaffir Spruit. No move to-day. Stables and breakfast at 7.30. I took the horses watering and

grazing. It was a fine, hot day. We buried poor Corporal Bates; the whole company turned out, and Captain Brass read the service. A military funeral is always very impressive. At 4 I took the horses to water; on the way back our friends woke up the camp by shelling it. One shell burst right among my horses; amusing to see them rear and the fellows tumble off in all directions. As I got in everybody had to stand to. The Boer gun was about 8,000 yards north-east of the camp, and out of range of our guns. One shell burst among J Battery and disabled one gun. About twenty shells burst in camp; nobody was hurt, however. Our guns turned out and shelled a farm halfway out. All quiet at 6.30, so turned in. We move at 1 with no waggons, but taking two days' rations for men and horses.

May 9.—Reveille at 12, midnight; moved off at 2 a.m. north-east to go for the Boers, and if possible secure gun. Force: 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry (Colonel Jenner) in support and rear; half-battalion Dorsets in advance; J Battery (four guns); 74th Battery (four guns); Colt guns; one pom-pom; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles; bodyguard, flanks and advanced guard and scouts. All under General Bullock. Many halts, owing to one or two stiff drifts. A bright, waning moon. At first dawn the advanced guard came in touch with Boers, who retired hastily after sending a few shells into us. We proceeded east, and halted near Ermelo, which for the past few weeks has been the Boer seat of government. The Boers have evacuated it, and are sitting on the surrounding hills. The Government has trekked on to Amsterdam. At 2 p.m. the 14th Mounted Infantry went back to escort our waggons along, and had a small rearguard action with fifty Boers. We halted and camped at 4.30 p.m.

May 10.—Riet Spruit, near Ermelo. Reveille at 5.30; a cold, frosty morning. No. 1 Company stood to arms at 5. At 7.30 a.m. all the mounted troops

proceeded out for a reconnaissance in force: Gough's Mounted Infantry, bodyguard, 74th Battery (four guns), under Bimbachi Stuart (Western Force); 13th Mounted Infantry, 14th Mounted Infantry, J Battery (four guns), one pom-pom, under Colonel Jenner (Eastern Force). I can only relate regarding our force: 14th Mounted Infantry led, No. 3 Company in advance. There was a general sniping from surrounding ridges, and J Battery were in action several times. At 9 a.m. I was sent out on extreme right with twenty men to scout a very high and commanding ridge, being covered by J Battery and supported by the Gloucesters (No. 4 Company). The ridge was two miles long, commanding all around it. I got my men well extended, and they made a trot for it. I found the hills clear of the enemy and reported. There was a magnificent view. I saw Ermelo, a pretty little town east of us, and far away north-west I could discern about 200 or 300 Boers trekking off east. I then rejoined the battalion, which had come up. At 3 p.m. the whole force retired to camp, 14th Mounted Infantry leading, half No. 1 Company advance guard (Brass), half No. 1 Company left flank guard (myself), half No. 2 Company support to me, half No. 2 Company right flank, 13th Mounted Infantry main body and rearguard. Proceeded. I occupied a high ridge on the left, and moved along it, our friends the Boers holding ridges parallel to me. At 4 p.m. I sighted a Cape-cart and ten Boers galloping away at 1,000 yards to left rear. I fired at them, and was just going in pursuit when about fifty Boers appeared, creeping up the ridge, and bringing a pretty heavy fire on us. It was too hot for me, so I signalled my men to gallop and get the horses under cover under the ridge, which they did admirably. At the same time Cooke came up and supported me. All advanced and brought a pretty effective fire on the Boers, who retired under cover. At this moment a most extraordinary thing happened: two Boers got up out of a

little donga at 100 yards, mounted, and cleared off. Thirty men fired at them, but as far as I could see they got off—a wonderful escape for them. Two or three hundred Boers were then seen coming up. Immediately afterwards we got an order to retire, as it was getting dusk, to the main column. We retired alternately from ridge to ridge by sections. We had no casualties, which is wonderful, and does not say much for rifle accuracy on the part of the enemy. All returned to same camp at 6.30 p.m.—a long and tiring day, but pretty exciting. It is magnificent weather: very cold, clear, frosty nights, but hot days; water generally frozen solid every morning.

May 11.—Reveille at 6. I remain in camp to-day. Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and bodyguard with their guns proceeded out at 8 a.m., the former to assist Provost-Marshal in clearing out Ermelo and bringing in the women and children, the latter to take up a suitable position on surrounding hills to cover Johannesburg Mounted Rifles. At 11 a.m. the 14th Mounted Infantry were ordered out, as a report came in by helio that some of the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles were in difficulties. We went out with guns, and took up a position on ridge north of camp and overlooking Ermelo, and there remained till 2. Returned, 13th Mounted Infantry having relieved us; we had to stand by all day, however. Johannesburg Mounted Rifles had one officer and one man wounded; bodyguard, too, had a small action with Boers. At 5 o'clock the waggons came back from Ermelo with 300 women. A night attack is expected, and everybody sleeps fully dressed and equipped.

May 12.—All quiet. Reveille at 4; moved off due south at 6: 13th Mounted Infantry right flank, 14th Mounted Infantry left flank, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles cover retirement, bodyguard and gun advanced guard, Gough's Mounted Infantry rearguard, No. 3 Company (Gloucesters) scouting to left flank, No. 1 Company (East Yorks) being rearguard to left flank.

The Gloucesters had a slight skirmish at a farm, took two prisoners (bodyguard to Louis Botha), and wounded two. The column encamped at 3, J Battery and half a company left out on left flank as outpost. Put out three posts. Ten Boers kept us all on the *qui vive* all the afternoon by riding round our posts and sniping at us. We kept up a desultory fire on them, but were unable to hit one.

May 13.—Drinkwater. Gough's Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery R.H.A. proceeded at 4.30 a.m., and held ridge south-west of camp. The remainder of the camp had reveille at 4, and moved off at 6 south-south-west: 13th Mounted Infantry and pom-pom advanced guard and left flank guard; bodyguard and guns, half-battalion Dorsets, right flank guard; two guns J Battery, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, rearguard; 14th Mounted Infantry in reserve, and main body. There were slight actions all round with small bodies of Boers. The advanced guard shelled the enemy several times; they always retired. The 13th Mounted Infantry and bodyguard got two prisoners each. A cold, windy day. We reached camp at 3.

May 14.—Kaffir Spruit. Reveille at 2 a.m. The force moved at 4 a.m. as follows: Three companies 13th Mounted Infantry right flank; three companies 14th Mounted Infantry main body and on right of guns; two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry advanced guard; four guns J Battery R.H.A., and one pom-pom, under General Bullock, and carrying one day's rations and forage. The rest of the column remains in camp. Unfortunately our company have to stay behind, as we are on outpost to-night. Dug trenches after breakfast. The Boers sniped our posts all round the camp. A fine, hot day. The force returned at 4.30 p.m., having had a long march of twelve miles out and twelve miles in. Saw no Boers, but captured three waggons. We went on outpost and occupied a line west and south-west of camp. A bitterly cold, frosty night. About fifty or sixty Boers

On the Veldt.

are sitting on a ridge five miles west-south-west, well out of our gun range.

May 15.—All quiet, but an awfully cold night—ten degrees frost. Returned to camp at 6. A welcome breakfast! Moved off west-south-west at 8. At 8.30 our advanced guard came in touch with some Boers in a good position occupying a long ridge culminating in a Spitzkop. Heavy firing ensued on both sides; the Boers ultimately retired at 9.30. Meanwhile No. 2 Company (Brindley) moved out on left flank towards a high ridge five miles long. Their scouts came in touch with Boers. At 9.30 the whole of the 14th, with two guns 74th Battery, went out to reinforce them. The Boers, about 150 in number, were retiring hard, and only offered a distant target for the guns, which had galloped up. Proceeded on left flank of column. At 10.30 we came quite close to Blaauwkop and Vaalkop, where we were the other day, and had another skirmish. The column then changed direction due north. I went out with Hilton to scout left flank and hold all strong positions. We saw several Boers about 5,000 yards off and exchanged shots with a few snipers. Nos. 1 and 2 Companies held left flank until the column got into camp. The advanced guard had another action to-day. There are big veldt fires all round. Returned to camp at 6 p.m.

May 16.—Twiefontein, on road to Standerton. Column remains in camp, while No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry, No. 2 Company 13th Mounted Infantry, and two guns J Battery, under Major Pratt, go towards Standerton to meet outcoming convoy at 6 a.m. A fine, cold morning. I take advanced scouts. Met advanced guard of convoy at 8. Their force consists of: 1,500 Australian Imperial Bushmen, 600 Sharpshooters Imperial Yeomanry, one Elswick 12-pounder for us, one battery H.A. (Major Rimington). Column moved off at 1 p.m. east again, Rimington's column being on our left. The combined movements of various columns is as follows: Major-General Kitchener's

column, Poulteney, Allenby, Knox, from north-north-east to north-west; Rimington, General Bullock, from west. All are working towards Ermelo, Carolina, and Piet Retief, under General Bindon Blood. The body-guard returned to Standerton with empty waggons and prisoners; had an uneventful march of eight miles east and camped at 5.30 p.m.

May 17.—Brakfontein. Reveille at 4; moved off at 6 a.m. as follows: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns J Battery advanced guard; Gough's Mounted Infantry and pom-pom right flank; Nos. 1 and 4 Companies 14th Mounted Infantry left flank; Nos. 2 and 3 Companies 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery rearguard. I was scouting on the left flank, and saw Boers in the distance. Rimington's column was in rear of ours. An uneventful march. We halted and camped on old familiar ground south of Ermelo. Apparently all the Boers have cleared from here.

May 18.—Riet Spruit, near Ermelo. Reveille at 5; moved off at 7. J Battery R.H.A., Gough's Mounted Infantry, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, under Colonel Bimbachi Stuart, moved off at 6 a.m. to take up position between Lake Chrissie and Vaal River; 5th Corps Mounted Infantry (13th and 14th), 74th Battery R.F.A., one pom-pom, moved off at 7 and occupied position round Vlakfontein, under General Bullock; Dorset Regiment, Elswick gun, two sections Gough's Mounted Infantry, R.E. and transport, under Lieutenant-Colonel Law, move at 8 a.m., and occupy Tafel Kop north - north - east of Ermelo. General move from Tafel Kop across Vaal River to south point of Lake Chrissie. Two days' rations carried. Our column moved off in rear of Stuart. It was a cold day and a rather uneventful march, except that an advanced guard (No. 3 Company) spotted and burnt a waggon containing fifteen Martini rifles, two Mausers, and 8,000 rounds of assorted ammunition. Went eight miles north-north-east and halted and camped at 2 p.m. All turned out to extinguish a veldt fire.

May 19.—Vlakfontein. This is very near a place called Tolderia, where we camped during Alderson's trek. Reveille at 6; breakfast at 7. A lovely warm day after a cold night. The 13th Mounted Infantry sent out patrols all round, and No. 4 Company sent out an escort to bring in a Boer family. No. 2 Company went out on patrol in the afternoon.

May 20.—Reveille at 6; moved off at 8 back to Ermelo to take up a position overlooking Ermelo between Bushman's and Tafel Kop as before. Colonel Stuart moves to Mooifontein. General Bindon Blood is at Carolina. The Boers are east and south-east, towards Piet Retief. We marched as follows: No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry right flank and advanced guard (I on right flank). We had an uneventful march. It was a beautiful sunny day. We reached Tafel Kop at 2. Visited one farm on the way and got plenty of mealies for the horses. The column has been on half-rations, both man and beast, since the 15th. I went on outpost with fifty men and covered west section of camp. It was a bitterly cold night. All was quiet.

May 21.—Tafel Kop. The force remains halted to-day, except the 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns 74th Battery, and one pom-pom, who are out under General Officer Commanding on reconnaissance. We moved off at 9 due east, as follows: No. 2 Company both flanks and advanced guard. Advanced guard under Hilton came into touch with from fifteen to twenty Boers on a high kopje; we shelled and pom-pommed them; they decamped hastily. No. 1 Company (mine) galloped on left flank right out after them, and had a running skirmish from ridge to ridge. They were too fast for us, however. About four miles further east I saw some Boers—200 or 300. At 12.30 all returned to camp, having ascertained the Boer whereabouts. Arrived in camp at 4, having done about sixteen miles. The Boers all retired to mountains south-east.

May 22.—The force remains halted to-day, awaiting convoy with supplies from Carolina. The 13th Mounted

Infantry go out with empty waggons and two guns 72nd Battery to collect supplies from surrounding farms.

Reveille at 6; breakfast at 7. Usual duties. We sent out sixty men to get mealies for the horses. A most lovely day, which I spent quietly in camp.

May 23.—Reveille at 3 a.m. The following force moved off at 5 a.m. due west, to hold a strong kopje five miles west, overlooking Ermelo; the camp remains standing: 13th Mounted Infantry furnish advanced guard; three companies 14th Mounted Infantry furnish right flank guard; four guns J Battery, two sections Goff's Mounted Infantry, one pom-pom. All under General Bullock.

The object seems to stop and round up Boers driven down from the north, and to hold the position secure for incoming convoy. A very cold, frosty morning, but afterwards beautifully warm. We marched six miles and occupied strong kopjes west of Ermelo. We laid low, but the 13th Mounted Infantry caught one Boer, who walked straight into them. They might have caught about twenty more, if they had not taken fright and got off. We returned at 3 to camp, No. 1 Company furnishing rearguard; No. 2 Company remained in camp. Colonel Stuart's column is at Mooifontein; Colonel Rimington's column is about ten miles north-north-east; we heard his guns.

May 24.—We remain in camp to-day. Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and Gough's Mounted Infantry go out at 8 on reconnaissance west of Ermelo. Stuart's column returned last night. Reveille at 6. A cold, misty morning. Sudden orders came to move at 9 on reconnaissance under the General. Force: 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry and six guns 74th Battery. Proceeded west on the Standerton road to meet convoy with supplies. Went as far as Spitzkop, where we sighted it. Waited here till convoy's advanced guard reached the foot of Spitzkop. At 3 p.m. we returned to camp. All quiet.

Special billet for our company. Forty or fifty Boers were seen to visit a farm five miles south-south-east of camp, and about half remained. We are to leave camp at 8 p.m., surround the farm, and catch anybody there. We took out sixty picked men from the company, and started at 8. We took our bearings by the Southern Cross, and kept in the valleys, reaching big mealy fields one mile south of farm at 9.30, where we converged. I took the left with twenty-five men, Brass took the centre with fifteen men, and Waters took the right with twenty men. I forgot to say we were dismounted. Half a waning moon was all the light we had. Brass arranged I was to meet him at the farm at 10.30. We crept on cautiously—most exciting, not a sound! I arrived first at 10.15, and posted my men with fixed bayonets right round the left half of farm and stables. Waters arrived at 10.20, and we joined hands. I then took two good men and crept up to the house, where I lay down, meeting Brass at 10.27. There was not a hitch anywhere. Brass and I, with four men, burst open the door and walked in, armed to the teeth. Nothing, except two cats! An awful disappointment! However, we put posts out and laid down, as we were all hidden, to be ready for any visitors during the night or in the morning. It was a bitterly cold night, with neither fires nor smoking, of course.

May 25.—Farm, five miles south-south-east of Tafel Kop. The night passed quietly. We stood to at 4 and waited. No Boers came up. At 6 I took out a reconnoitring patrol two miles south-south-east. All clear; the ridges eight miles south-east held by Boers. Cleared farm of all livestock in the way of chickens, and returned to camp at 9. A lovely morning. The force remains halted; we move, however, to-night. After dinner the following force moved out and rendezvoused at Tafel Kop at 10 p.m.: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, advanced guard; Gough's Mounted Infantry flank and main body; 74th Battery and 14th Mounted Infantry rearguard.

We marched off at 11 p.m.; no noise, no smoking. It was a clear, cold, moonlight night. We marched south-south-east, through the farm where we were last night then right round Boer position of yesterday, then east to a high ridge known as Welgelegen. After having done sixteen miles, we reached here at 2 a.m. A bitterly cold, frosty night. All halted, and slept as well as we could expect in the cold for what seemed a few minutes.

May 26.—Welgelegen. All turned out at 4.30 a.m. Gough's Mounted Infantry, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, and 74th Battery moved off at 5, at first daybreak, for a reconnaissance in force under the General. The 14th Mounted Infantry remain here, and hold the ridge which commands the country all round. My post overlooks country south and south-east. Watched Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and Gough's Mounted Infantry. They executed a most beautiful movement, driving about 150 Boers off a big sloping ridge helter skelter. They were covered by the 7th Battery, which sent home some very effective shells. At 1.30, after reconnoitring some ten miles of country, they returned, and we received orders to form a rearguard to them. It was a most lovely, hot day. After an uneventful march of about eight miles we reached camp at 5 p.m. The column moved at 8 this morning, and marched straight to our present camp—Camden's, Vaal River. Colonel Gray's column, then Rimington's column, are on our right flank. Very, very tired! Although we gained no conspicuous success, owing to the Boer battery in all directions, it has been good in this way, that it gave them a good fright and worried them enormously.

May 27.—Vaal River. Reveille at 6; breakfast at 7. Moved off at 9 due east as follows: 13th Mounted Infantry, two guns 74th R.F.A., advanced guard; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles furnish right flank guard; Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; No. 4 Company 14th Mounted Infantry and three guns 74th R.F.A. rearguard.

Cold, rainy day. Uneventful march of six miles. Halted and camped at 3.

May 28.—Steenkhool. Reveille at 3. Cold, frosty. Moved off at 5 east-south-east, as follows: Gough's Mounted Infantry, who furnish advanced guard; 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry furnish flank and rearguard; J Battery, pom-pom. All under General Officer Commanding for reconnaissance in force south-east.

The 74th Battery, with one squadron Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, start at 6 and take up position overlooking Bankop (high ridge) east-south-east of camp. Remainder of column goes at 9 under Lieutenant-Colonel Law. It was a most enjoyable march. A lovely sunrise showed the beautiful scenery to fullest advantage. We got within view of our old friends, Spitzkop, Ilangaapiesberg, and Verzamelsberg to south. No Boers to be seen, although we expected some fighting. We marched on and halted at 9. Then we returned towards column, and we (No. 1 Company) took up our position on a huge ridge, which culminated towards south by a sheer drop of 1,000 feet. Here we had a magnificent view of fifty miles south, south-east, and south-west.

Orders to rejoin at 12. Marched back and joined main column at 1. We reached camp at 2. I and Waters went on outpost to-night. The Boers sniped my post, but did not come very close; they kept us awake though. A lovely moonlight night; very cold.

May 29.—Waaihoek. After a fairly lively night we were relieved at 7, and returned to camp at 7.30. The force moved at 9 a.m. as follows: Two Companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, 13th Mounted Infantry, two companies Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, two guns J Battery, two guns 74th R.F.A., one pom-pom; reconnaissance on left, or east, under General Officer Commanding. We (14th Mounted Infantry) do rearguard to whole column. We waited some two hours for the last of the column to go. I myself occupied a ridge north-east of camp with thirty men, and had

three posts out. The first post was severely sniped, and I went up to reinforce. About ten to twenty Boers were sniping all round. We fired back. I had orders then to rejoin Brass and proceed as rearguard, so retired at gallop. Our friends followed us, and kept up a running skirmish from ridge to ridge. We marched then due south to right of Spitzkop, and halted and camped at 5, after having done about eleven miles. There is very bad water here.

May 30.—Bushman's Vlei. Reveille at 6, on a bitterly cold, windy morning. Marched off at 9 as follows: Two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, 14th Mounted Infantry, four guns J Battery, two guns 74th Battery, under General Officer Commanding. Flying column on left flank. The remainder of the force is to go with the column under Lieutenant-Colonel Law. The 14th were advanced guard to flying column, No. 2 Company scouting.

We marched south-east, then south. Our guns shelled some distant Boers, who followed us, and the Elswick 12-pounder put some useful shells into a farm at 11,000 yards, about forty or fifty Boers clearing out. We proceeded and marched south-west towards Blaauwkop without any further incident worth mentioning. It was a warm day; there were big veldt fires.

We crossed Umkusi River, and halted and camped at 3. We have now to camp on the burnt veldt, as the General had his kit and tent burnt two days ago. It is very dirty and disagreeable.

May 31.—Bushmanplaats. The column remained halted to-day. Reveille at 6. Breakfast and stables. The horses we got from Newcastle are lasting very well; we (No. 1 Company) have only lost 25 out of 127—the best horses we have had in Mounted Infantry so far. My own are going strong. I went out with Brass foraging, and took eight men. Brass shot a koran, and we also got a Scotch cart full of mealies, besides plenty of poultry. A lovely hot day.

In the afternoon, after stables, we had a football match—left half-company *v.* right half-company. Left half (mine) won by five goals to three.

June 1.—Reveille at 6. Breakfast. Moved off at 8 west as follows: Two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, two squadrons Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, 13th Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery, two guns 74th Battery and pom-pom, under General Officer Commanding. Flying column on left flank. Fourteenth Mounted Infantry do rearguard to column; Nos. 3 and 4 Companies do our side guards and scouting. A boisterous, windy, and cold day, and very dusty. About fifty or sixty Boers followed us again, and kept us fairly busy. We crossed the Vaal River over Beginderlen Bridge (a fine stone one), and halted and camped the other side at 4 p.m., after having marched about nine miles. The force under General Officer Commanding had a running fight with 200 or 300 Boers.

June 2.—Outspann, Beginderlen Bridge. Reveille at 6; breakfast at 7. Marched off at 8 as follows: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns 74th Battery R.A. advanced guard, 14th Mounted Infantry and three guns 74th Battery R.A. rearguard, Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns 74th Battery R.A. right and left flanks.

My company was rearguard, and I had charge of outlying scouts. Our friends came again, and gave us a friendly greeting; it was very difficult to see them, owing to all the veldt being burnt. A series of small skirmishes followed. We had no casualties. Marched about eight miles, then halted and camped at 2 o'clock.

June 3.—Dorpsplaats. Reveille at 6; breakfast at 7. Marched off as follows: Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.A. advanced guard, 14th Mounted Infantry left flank, 13th Mounted Infantry right flank, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns R.A. rearguard. No. 4 Company scout on left flank, remainder of battalion in support. A bright, hot day, after a very

cold night. The veldt, black and burnt, is a great contrast to the blue sky and brilliant sun. We came into touch on the left with Knox's column going south-east, with Plumer's column on his right, going in the same direction, and informed Colonel Jenner and the General. Halted and camped at 2 p.m., after having marched about nine miles. Same camp as we were at on May 15.

June 4.—Morgenzou, Kaffir Spruit. Reveille at 6; moved off at 8 as follows: 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard, Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. rearguard, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles right and left flanks.

We marched the identical march as on May 15. The veldt all burnt. A lovely day. The rearguard was in action all day, and had two casualties. We halted and camped at 2 p.m. A bitterly cold night.

June 5.—Uitkyk, Standerton road. Reveille at 6. Moved off at 8 towards Standerton. I had permission to go on ahead to get stores for my company. I rode on with an orderly, and reached Standerton at 11. No stores here, as all were cleared out by outgoing columns. Took 4 o'clock down mail to Newcastle. Reached here at 2 a.m. Awfully cold.

June 6.—Newcastle. Went to the Salisbury Hotel. Bought stores sufficient for three months, and got same put on truck for midnight goods-train to-night. Saw Eustace, also Major Burton. I hear that Colonel Hill and Major Blake have gone home, retired. Four other fellows were getting stores, too, for Gough's Mounted Infantry and Johannesburg Mounted Rifles.

No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry, 5th Corps, Field Force, South Africa, Standerton, June 10.

Reveille at 6. Got fifteen good remounts to-day. Went into Standerton. Cold, windy, cloudy day. Standerton is a small, straggling town. At 1 o'clock General Officer Commanding moved to Leeuwspruit

(south-east) with part of column and waggons. Bodyguard (200 men only now) and pom-pom advanced guard, Gough's Mounted Infantry flanks and rearguard. J Battery and 74th Battery; battalion of Dorsets. Fifth Corps and Johannesburg Mounted Rifles remain here till to-morrow to get horses. Usual camp duties with us.

June 11.—Reveille at 5. Breakfast. We (No. 1) get thirty horses from 13th Mounted Infantry, and No. 3 and 4 Companies get horses from No. 2 Company, who remain here. Thirteenth Mounted Infantry remain here, all except one company, who are attached to us.

The force moved off at 8, under Colonel Jenner, as follows: Remainder of column and waggons, 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1 Company) advanced guard, 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 2 Company) right flank guard, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles rearguard and left flank (600 men).

Marched to Leeuwspruit, and here joined General Officer Commanding. Marched, then, another five miles south-east, and halted and camped at 3. A cold, windy, rainy day. Strength of our company ninety-six men.

June 12.—Uitkyk. Reveille at 6. Marched off at 8 south-east as follows: 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 2 Company) and two guns J Battery advanced guard, Gough's Mounted Infantry rearguard, bodyguard right flank guard, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles left flank guard.

Marched about six miles south-east, when we got to more broken country. The left flank of the advanced guard got into touch with between thirty and fifty Boers. After some firing on both sides, our guns shelled the Boers, who retired, leaving one killed. Our casualties were nil. One dog was shot, however, through the neck, but is still alive, and a great hero in consequence. We moved on another three miles, then halted and camped at 2 p.m. Grazed and watered horses.

June 13.—Morgenzou (Standerton road). Reveille at 6. A flying column, under General Officer Commanding, moved off at 8.30, composed of three companies 14th Mounted Infantry (13th Company remain in), Gough's Mounted Infantry (less one company), Johannesburg Mounted Rifles (less one squadron), bodyguard, pom-pom, J Battery R.H.A.

The whole of the remainder of the column remain here entrenched. Carry two days' rations and forage. No tents. We moved off at 8 south-east. It was a lovely morning. We marched about twelve miles over old familiar country, and halted and camped at 4. Camped at Kaffir Spruit. No. 1 Company (mine) was ordered out for a night trek to a farm four miles due east, close to stony kopjes, six miles west of branch, to blockade drift and junction of roads. Proceeded at 7, mounted. A cold, frosty, dark night, uneventful except for the fact that we shot a mounted Kaffir, who was undoubtedly a Boer spy. The General's two guides came with us—Forbes and another. We reached our destination at 9.30, but did not find any Boers. Put outposts, and kraaled horses. I took a section on the ridge overlooking country. A farm was burnt and destroyed by Gray's column.

June 14.—Column at Kaffir Spruit. We are at a farm four miles east. Stood to arms at 5. All quiet; not a Boer in sight. Rejoined main body at 9. Order of march: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard, 14th Mounted Infantry rear-guard, bodyguard right flank, Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank.

Marched west-south-west. A most beautiful day, after a cold night. Halted, and had welcome breakfast at 10. The veldt is burnt for miles round, as well as almost every farm. An uneventful march over old ground. We marched twelve miles, and halted and camped at 4. We joined remainder of column here.

June 15.—Doth Plaats, Kaffir Spruit. Reveille at 6. Marched off at 9 due south as follows: 14th Mounted

Infantry left flank; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles rearguard and two guns R.H.A.; bodyguard advanceguard, R.H.A.; Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank.

Gough's Mounted Infantry and Johannesburg Mounted Rifles had a bit of a skirmish with fifty or sixty Boers on right front. The Boers, however, retired hastily. We marched about seven miles, and halted and camped at 2. Gough's Mounted Infantry had one man hit and two horses shot. I went on outpost with twenty-five men and held north-east section. A cold night, but all quiet.

June 16.—Beginderlen Bridge, Vaal River. This is another old camp. Stood to arms this morning at 5. All quiet; firing, however, on south-west side of camp. Relieved at 6.30. A beautiful sunrise, but a cold, frosty morning. Returned to camp. We had orders to move at 1, which were ultimately cancelled. The General Officer Commanding left here at 8 p.m. with a flying column composed of: Gough's Mounted Infantry on extreme right flank; remainder of force on extreme left flank; we (14th Mounted Infantry) remain behind to escort convoy.

June 17.—Reveille at 5. Moved off at 7 due south with column as follows: No. 1 Company left flank; No. 2 Company rearguard; No. 3 Company advanced guard; No. 4 Company right flank.

I was in charge of extreme left flank scouts, and saw General Officer Commanding's column on extreme left. Proceeded. Firing on right flank. Marched about seven miles, and then General Officer Commanding's force came in and joined main column after having done a comparatively uneventful trek. We remained out on left flank, and came in touch with fifty or sixty Boers. I kept up a running skirmish with these, being reinforced by another section; then halted near Rolfontein, and took up a strong position to cover left or east of camp. The Boers came on, and exchanged shots with us. I hit one, but he got off. At 4 p.m. I went out to reconnoitre a big farm, and took

ten good men. We got sniped, but had no casualties. I got information I wanted about the supplies at the farm, and according to orders returned to camp at 7. Slight actions were fought on our right flank and rearguard. We took three prisoners and had two casualties.

June 18.—Rolfontein. Reveille at 6. Column marched at 9 a.m. as follows: Two guns R.A., Gough's Mounted Infantry advanced guard; 14th Mounted Infantry right flank; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles left flank; bodyguard rearguard.

I turned out at 4 and took fifteen good men and a waggon to the farm I reconnoitred last night. I arrived there at 5, and procured for my company ten sacks of mealies (1,500 lb.). All clear; no Boers. Returned to camp at 7.30. As before stated, we moved off at 9 due south towards Wakkerstroom. A most lovely day; there are magnificent mountains to the south of us. No. 3 Company (Cooke) scouted on right flank to-day. We had an uneventful march of about ten miles, and halted and camped at 2 p.m. A slight action was fought by the advanced guard and left flank guard with twenty or thirty Boers. The country becomes rather stiff and hilly. I received the welcome intelligence to-day, from helio at Graspan, that last month 2,600 Boers were taken prisoners, and this month (up to 9th inst.) 620 had been taken prisoners; I also heard that General Elliot had defeated De Wet at Reitz. Our marches are greatly enlivened every day by game-shooting—koran, hares, quail, plover, paauws, etc. I have no gun, but Brass shoots something every day, and we have game every night. I have only a carbine, and it is awfully hard to hit anything with it. We marched to-day south-south-west.

June 19.—Driefontein. Reveille at 5. Marched south as follows: 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns 74th advanced guard; bodyguard right flank guard; Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and pom-pom rearguard.

No. 1 Company furnished advanced guard, and I was in charge of forty men in the scouting line. The country was very stiff, but it was an enjoyable march. There were no trees, however, which was rather disappointing. A lovely day. Marched about ten miles, then halted and camped within seven miles of Wakkerstroom. We halt here for three days to send in empty waggons and get out fresh supplies, then proceed, probably, to Bethel, then on to Standerton. Our horses are in splendid condition, and the men are very keen and working well. The weather is magnificent—cold, frosty nights, and lovely hot days. The country is black, but rugged and most beautiful.

14th Mounted Infantry,
Heidelberg, June 20.

General Bullock has been sent down the lines of communication, and our new General is Brigadier-General Spens (Shropshires). Our transport is to be considerably curtailed by order of K. of K., and we shall, I expect, not take any tents. Yesterday we got seventy-nine new horses for the battalion, mostly Canadian, and very fair. We are well off for horses now, having about twenty-four spare per company.

The other evening R. P. Lewis (Oxford wicket-keeper), late of C.I.V. M.I., dined with me, also Gretton. The former has taken a commission in the Devons, and is now in Gough's Mounted Infantry.

June 21.—Langburg, seven miles north-east of Wakkerstroom. Reveille at 6. At 10 No. 1 Company (mine) went out on reconnaissance four miles out due north. We came in touch with eight Boers, who sniped us some way off. They decamped, however. The veldt all round is burnt, and as black as charcoal. Returned at 3 to camp. The convoy returned from Wakkerstroom with twelve days' supplies and mails, also No. 2 Company (14th Mounted Infantry) and 13th Mounted Infantry. I heard to-day of a bad

disaster near Bethel: 250 men and two pom-poms were rushed at night by a strong commando of Boers, and were compelled to surrender. This is very bad news, as it strengthens the Boers and defers the end of the war. It rained all night.

June 22.—Reveille at 6. A cold, cloudy day. We marched off at 10 due north-east as follows: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns advanced guard; Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns flying column on left flank; 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard to column; 14th Mounted Infantry right flank guard to column; bodyguard and their guns and pom-pom and No. 3 Company (14th Mounted Infantry) rearguard.

Marched about eight miles. I scouted on right flank. Desultory sniping. A stiff, mountainous country. There were many halts owing to the column having to cross four drifts. Encamped at 5. It rained all night.

June 23.—Mooipoort. Reveille at 6. Moved off at 10 due east as follows: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns advanced guard; bodyguard and their guns rearguard; Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns flying column left flank; 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry, two guns and pom-pom flying column on right flank.

A warm cloudy day. Country still very stiff. We (5th Corps) went about three miles from column and came in touch with thirty to fifty Boers, who retired after being well shelled. The column marched about five miles, and we halted and camped at 3 o'clock. Our camp lies in a shallow depression surrounded by high ground. I slept on inlying picket.

June 24.—Vrigheid's Farm. Reveille at 6. I stood to arms with my picket at 5.30. A glorious sunrise; the mountains look most beautiful tipped with the morning sun. A 9 a.m. observation posts west of camp were driven in by ten venturesome Boers. They decamped, however, after being well pom-pommed.

No. 1 Company (mine) went out at once, and occupied the whole ridge west of camp, I on left with thirty men, Waters next, and then Brass. We saw our friends and made it pretty hot for them whenever they appeared.

Column moved at 10 as follows: Bodyguard and guns and pom-pom, two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, two guns, advanced guard; Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank; 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. rearguard; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns on left flank.

At 10.30 Johannesburg Mounted Rifles came in contact with a strong commando of between 300 and 400 Boers strongly posted on a huge ridge on left flank, about due north. A general action now came on, chiefly artillery directed on the position the Boers held. This lasted till 12.30, when the Boer firing virtually ceased. Johannesburg Mounted Rifles had one casualty, and besides there were one or two others. The column only went four or five miles east and halted.

June 25.—Waterval. The column remained halted. Two strong forces went out, however, on reconnaissance amongst the Ilangaapiesberg and Verzamelsberg as follows:—No. 1 column, under General Officer Commanding: 14th Mounted Infantry and pom-pom, advanced guard and flanks; 12th Mounted Infantry, four guns J Battery, main body; one squadron Johannesburg Mounted Rifles rearguard. No. 2 column under Lieutenant-Colonel Chesney, of bodyguard: bodyguard and their guns; Gough's Mounted Infantry.

Reveille was at four, and we marched off at 6 due east; then immediately due south towards the Ilangaapiesberg. Colonel Chesney's force were on our extreme right. A fine, cold day. No. 1 Company was advanced guard, and I had charge of scouting. A most magnificent country, but very difficult to scout. On my right was a succession of huge kopjes. We met with desultory sniping all along, so proceeded

cautiously. At 8.30 we reached a farm, out of which we saw four Boers gallop. We halted here and cleared the farm of poultry, etc. The Boers opened fire at us from kopjes on the right, and from another farm 1,200 yards on our left front. I got my men together in groups and replied, then sent back for support. Brass came up with the remainder of the company, two guns J Battery, and pom-pom. After being well shelled, the Boers evacuated. I followed those on our left front and put a good fire into them. It was a most exciting ride over the hills and dongas. All halted here till 2 p.m., then returned to camp the same way, bringing in with us 400 cattle and 3,000 sheep. We reached camp at 4. No. 1 Company were for outpost. My post was on a huge kopje about a mile south-east of the camp, with thirty men. It was a cold, rainy night, but all was clear. Colonel Chesney did well on the right; he killed one Boer and brought in 800 oxen and 2,000 sheep.

June 26.—Reveille at 5. I stood to arms at 5.30, and saw a wonderful sunrise with early morning mists among the mountains. From where I was I could see fifty miles round.

The force moved at 8 back due north as follows: Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns advanced guard; 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns rear-guard; bodyguard and guns, right flank; Gough's Mounted Infantry and pom-pom left flank.

No. 1 Company (mine) was escort to guns. We had a quiet though very interesting march. It was a warm day; we marched over nek due west of big kopje, which was held by between 200 and 300 Boers. Our guns shelled a big farm and kopje 7,300 yards north-west of nek, and drove out quite 100 Boers. Gough's Mounted Infantry were about six miles on left flank, and did some very effective work. We proceeded and camped at this big farm. This place was a centre for a Boer commando.

June 27.—Beelzebub (here's a name for you!). Re-

veille at 5. No. 1 Company stood to arms at 5.30. The column marched at 10 due north as follows: 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery advanced guard; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and two guns rearguard; 13th Mounted Infantry right flank; Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank.

No. 2 Company advanced guard and scouts. We had an uneventful march of about eight miles, seeing few Boers, and those far off. We passed over old ground, and halted and camped at Mooipoort. The only excitement was when a hare or a covey of koran got up, which was an immediate signal to all fellows with guns to trek off, followed by thirty or forty dogs —a regular tally-ho! It is great fun, too, in camp when a hare gets up; there is enormous excitement and a regular hue and cry.

We reached camp at 4; a cold, fine, windy day.

June 28.—Mooipoort. Reveille at 6. A cold misty morning. We moved off at 9 due north through the poort as follows: Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery advanced guard; 13th Mounted Infantry right flank; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles left flank; 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery rearguard.

The 14th Mounted Infantry were rearguard, and took up positions on ridges surrounding rear of column.

No. 1 Company afterwards proceeded on right rear to relieve 13th Mounted Infantry. I went out with thirty men, and took up a position about a mile out, at a farm. Was there for an hour; thirty or forty Boers came within 1,800 yards, not knowing we were there, and we gave them a warm reception. They retired hastily. After that we rejoined the company, and all proceeded gradually through the poort, the Boers all round following and sniping us. Major Bridgeford worked the whole thing splendidly. It was a most difficult nek, with huge ridges on either side.

J Battery sent shells into any party of Boers who

showed themselves. The column was very slow shoving along, owing to the many drifts. We proceeded gradually, and halted and camped three miles north-north-east of nek. We reached camp at dusk (5.30 p.m.). It was a fine, cold, moonlight night after a cold, cloudy day. The Major is a rattling good commanding officer. It has been a long day, and we were very glad to get in. A company of the 13th Mounted Infantry had rather an exciting experience on the right flank early this morning. As I have already written, it was very misty. Well, they suddenly came in contact with from thirty to fifty Boers, who fired at them at 200 yards; they, of course, retired hastily, luckily having only three horses and one man hit. Pom-pom, however, and reinforcements came up at once, and the Boers bolted. At 9, Brass and I walked over to the gunners' camp, and we had a very jolly musical evening round a huge camp-fire. Delightful to hear some good songs again! I played a small selection. Turned in at 12.

June 29.—Driefontein. Reveille at 6. A thick mist and very cold. Moved at 9 north-west as follows: 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery advanced guard; Gough's Mounted Infantry, two guns, rearguard; 13th Mounted Infantry right flank; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles left flank. A most lovely day after the mist. We had an uneventful march of nine miles to Amersfoort. On approaching the hills beyond Amersfoort the scouts (No. 3 Company) got sniped. I was sent out with fifty men to hold a farm and cover their retreat, as they had gone too far. Did so, and retired again. Encamped here at 3. A brilliant sunset, beyond all description.

June 30.—Bergvliet, near Amersfoort. Reveille at 4. Flying column moved off at 6 north-west to Blaauwkop on reconnaissance, under General Officer Commanding as follows: Three companies 14th Mounted Infantry, three companies 13th Mounted Infantry, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, three com-

panies Gough's Mounted Infantry, J Battery R.H.A., pom-pom, taking two days' rations and forage. No carts or tents, except ambulance waggons.

No. 2 Company stayed with the main column, which moved at 9 due west to Stryd Kraal.

A cold morning. A very uneventful and tedious march of fourteen miles to Blaauwkop. We reached there at 12, and halted. Saw forty Boers, who trekked off. At 3 we moved back due south. I was left flank guard, and had a bit of sniping with eight or ten Boers, who followed us up. Trekked on till ten o'clock, when we reached the camp of the main column. It was a cold moonlight night, and both the men and horses were rather done. Turned in at 12.

July 1.—Stryd Kraal. Reveille at 6. The main column moved at 8.30 due west-south-west. All troops who were out yesterday moved at 11 in the same direction. We had another uneventful march of ten miles *en route* to Platrand—14th and 13th Mounted Infantry on right flank, Johannesburg Mounted Rifles rearguard. The latter came in for a skirmish with from thirty to fifty Boers, and had three men wounded. Halted and camped at 3.

July 5.—We trek the day after to-morrow to Orange River Colony after De Wet. No rest in Mounted Infantry, I am glad to say!

14th Mounted Infantry, 5th Corps,
Field Forces, South Africa.

July 7.—Standerton. Reveille at 4. A fine cold morning. A flying column went under General Officer Commanding due west towards Orange River Colony at 7 a.m. as follows: Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns 74th Battery move on left flank and close to Vaal River; 5th Corps 13th Mounted Infantry, 14th Mounted Infantry, four guns R.H.A., pom-pom, advanced column moving due west and north of Vaal River; remainder of force with Nos. 3 and 4 Com-

panies; 14th Mounted Infantry go with main column (convoy) at 9 a.m.

A lovely morning. 13th Mounted Infantry found advanced guard; 14th Mounted Infantry found right flank and rear guards. We marched through a flat, rolling veldt, all burnt and black for about ten miles. Shot seventy-six horses. Gough's Mounted Infantry on left flank had a skirmish with a few Boers under Commandant Strydman, all of whom got off, though Strydman has since been reported to be wounded. I went out two miles on right flank. Camped at 4 p.m. MacLean, of the East Yorks, joined the company to-night. I was very glad to see him.

July 8.—Goedgevonden. Reveille at 6. Moved off at 9 due west as follows: 14th Mounted Infantry, Gough's Mounted Infantry, four guns J Battery, F Section pom-pom, flying column under General Officer Commanding. The remainder of the troops go with the main column under Lieutenant-Colonel Law.

We crossed Vaal River to southern side. No. 4 Company (Gloucesters) were advanced guard. We marched about six miles to *Z*amenskomst, where we got in touch with fifty or sixty Boers. We had a running skirmish; the whole of the Mounted Infantry, with Gough's on extreme right and the 14th on the left, made a gallop. I had forty men on extreme left. We had a good gallop for eight miles, and saw more Boers, all, however, scattered and bolted. It was very exciting. We went as far as Hartebeestfontein, where we were ordered to stop. All then rendezvoused on high ground here at 4 p.m. Then came the long march of ten miles back to camp at *Z*amenskomst. Had it not been for peremptory orders to stop from General Bullock, we should have snaffled six waggons and several Boers. We reached camp at 7. There were huge veldt fires. It was a lovely cold night.

July 9.—*Z*amenskomst, Vaal River and Klip River. Reveille at 6. A most lovely morning. We moved off west-north-west as follows: Johannesburg Mounted

Rifles, two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, 13th Mounted Infantry, 74th Battery, flying column under General Officer Commanding on left flank. Remainder of troops moved with main column as follows: Two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery advanced guard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 3 and 4), right flank; Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and pom-pom rearguard.

We had an uneventful march of ten miles; General Officer Commanding's column had a bit of a skirmish with from thirty to forty Boers on our left flank. The column had two drifts to cross, consequently had many halts. We camped at 4.

July 10.—Inloop, Vaal River. Reveille at 6. A fine cold morning. We moved off at 9 due west as follows: Two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery advanced guard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 1 and 2), two guns, 74th Battery rearguard; No. 4 Company (Gloucesters) 14th Mounted Infantry right flank; No. 3 Company (Gloucesters) left flank.

Ox-waggons moved across drift, starting at daybreak. I had charge of right rear. We exchanged shots with five Boers, who persistently followed us, but kept at a respectful distance, and shot a good many Boer horses (Commander-in-Chief's orders), otherwise it was a long, uneventful march of ten or twelve miles with many halts. The day was hot and rather misty, very like a summer's day in London. Good old London! Eventually we camped at 5. We are now once again in the Orange River Colony. Last night's camp was just over the border. Gough's Mounted Infantry caught two Boers to-day. We marched to-day about ten miles west-south-west.

July 11.—Sidbury. Reveille at 6. A lovely cold morning. We marched off at 9 west-south-west as follows: Two companies 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.A. advanced guard; two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry rearguard; one company 13th

Mounted Infantry right flank; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank.

An uneventful march of four miles. We found the country full of farms which have been untapped. We halted and camped at 12 o'clock. At 2 p.m. the General took out a force on reconnaissance due west as follows: Nos 2 and 3 Companies 14th Mounted Infantry, two companies 13th Mounted Infantry, two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, and four guns J Battery. The remainder of the force remained in camp. The force went through Perth towards Wilje River, and took one prisoner, captured by a man who spotted two legs sticking out of an antbear hole. Returned at 6. No. 1 Company furnished north-east section of outposts (forty men under MacLean).

July 12.—Schiedam. The force remains halted to-day. Reveille at 6. At 10 o'clock General Officer Commanding took out the following force on reconnaissance due north: Nos. 1 and 4 Companies 14th Mounted Infantry, two companies 13th Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery, two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry. A fine, hot day. We came into touch with twenty or thirty Boers on hilly ground on right flank, who retired hastily after exchanging some shots. I destroyed a farm and filled up with mealies, then returned to camp at 4, after having marched about six miles out and seven miles in. Now MacLean has come, and there are four of us in the mess, we play bridge every night after dinner. There are quantities of game, hares—koran, dikkops, minor bustards, quails and plover—about here.

July 13th.—Reveille at 6. Moved off at 8.30 due north-north-west towards Villiersdorp as follows: two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 3 and 4) and two guns 74th Battery rearguard; one company (No. 1) right flank; one company (No. 2) left flank; 13th Mounted Infantry (one company) advanced guard, and two guns 74th Battery main body. The remainder of the mounted troops went as a flying column under

General Officer Commanding on left flank: one squadron Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, three companies 13th Mounted Infantry, Gough's Mounted Infantry, J Battery (four guns and pom-pom). The flying column came in touch with between 100 and 150 Boers, and had a running skirmish with them. I was in charge of right flank scouts and only saw Boers in the far distance. Marched ten to twelve miles, and halted and camped at Villiersdorp (Vaal River). The latter we crossed, and camped the other side. By Jove! I was here a year ago with the C.I.V. M.I. It brought back old memories.

July 14.—Villiersdorp. Reveille at 6. Moved off at 9 north-north-west towards Heidelberg as follows: Two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery, advanced guard; one company right flank; two companies 13th Mounted Infantry rearguard; one company left flank. The rearguard had a good deal of sniping when we left. We had with us 7,000 sheep (commandeered). Owing to being unable to get them across the Vaal, we killed 5,000 of them; this kept the whole column back till 1 p.m. We then moved on north-north-east. The rearguard were closely followed by fifty or sixty Boers, and several skirmishes took place, resulting in one Johannesburg Mounted Rifle being killed and one 13th Mounted Infantry severely wounded. The left flank guard also came into touch with 100 or 150 Boers on left flank. Halted and camped at 5, after having marched about ten miles.

July 15.—Rietfontein. Reveille at 5. Flying column moved due south at 7 a.m., under General Officer Commanding, as follows: Three companies 13th Mounted Infantry, three companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 4, 3, and 1), three companies Gough's Mounted Infantry, F Section pom-pom, four guns J Battery. The object: to burn Grist Mill, and if possible round up 100 to 150 Boers under Commandant Roos known to be in the neighbourhood. The remainder of the column remained halted here. No. 1 Company advanced guard, I in charge

of scouts and supports. Proceeded. At 8.30 my left flank scouts came into touch with Boer vedettes, who retired after exchanging shots. I saw them go off in direction of Grobler's Drift, and reposted. At 8.45 my right flank scouts caught a Boer and sent him in. I got some valuable information as to the whereabouts and strength of Commandant Roos, and reported. Crossed the Vaal River and captured a cart and two women stuck in the drift. A man got off. Proceeded to Grist Mill, which I destroyed; the Engineers blew up two hydraulic engines. The main body halted at the drift for two hours, then I picketed the hill round the Grist Mill. It was a lovely hot day. At 12 we proceeded south-south-east, and suddenly came on twenty Boers at 1,000 yards. My scouts behaved admirably, and fired off their horses without waiting. I got my supports up and sent back word, then proceeded at gallop. About 200 or 300 Boers came in view to left front and right front. I sent back word and asked for guns to come up sharp. The force deployed. All went forward—an exciting gallop, but our friends were too quick away for us. I saw twenty or thirty waggons about five miles west-north-west, and about 300 or 400 Boers trekking away as hard as they could in twos and threes, covering quite eight miles of country.

July 16.—Reveille at 6. The column moved at 9 a.m. north-north-west as follows: two companies 13th Mounted Infantry advanced guard to convoy; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry rearguard; Elswick gun and 74th Battery. Remainder of force (14th Mounted Infantry, four guns J Battery, one company 13th Mounted Infantry, one company Gough's Mounted Infantry, one company Johannesburg Mounted Rifles) remain and lie quiet after convoy has moved off, and wait events under General Officer Commanding.

Well, we waited till the column had moved, and then

took up a hidden position on black ground half-way up a rise. After waiting an hour we saw fifteen or twenty Boers come after the convoy. The whole of J Battery shelled them at 3,500 yards, and killed one man and two horses. No. 4 Company at same time made a gallop for them, but they all cleared like steam. The whole of the force then proceeded after the column, and marched about ten or twelve miles. A lovely day. We camped at 5 o'clock two miles from a big dam. Water and wood are both rather scarce.

July 17.—Vlakfontein. Reveille at 6. Marched off about due north as follows: Two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank guard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 1 and 2) rearguard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) left flank guard; all to main column. Remainder of mounted troops (one company Gough's Mounted Infantry, 13th Mounted Infantry, No. 3 Company 14th Mounted Infantry, one company Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, four guns J Battery, one pom-pom) flying column under General Officer Commanding in advance. A fine day; an uneventful march of ten miles. I was in charge of rearguard and supports, and the unpleasant job fell to me of killing horses, oxen and sheep on the line of march. As regards the enemy, only a few snipers. We halted and camped in the hills near Heidelberg. Most lovely scenery and beautiful weather.

July 18.—Zuiterbosch. Reveille at 6. The column moved at 8 into Heidelberg, about eight miles over hilly, but beautiful, country. We reached here at 2 o'clock. Heidelberg is a most beautifully situated town. Hext, of the Devons, rejoins here; Waters goes to Indian Staff Corps.

July 19.—Heidelberg. We shall probably remain here for seven days, then continue trekking to Orange River Colony after De Wet and De la Rey.

14th Mounted Infantry, 5th Corps,
Heidelberg, July 27.

After a welcome rest for all ranks of one week we started our trek this morning. Brigadier-General Spens, C.B., A.D.C., is in command *vice* Brigadier-General Bullock. The column moved at 6 a.m. south-south-east as follows: Fourteenth Mounted Infantry, two guns R.H.A. advanced-guard; R.E., three companies Dorsets, two guns R.F.A., Elswick gun, one company Dorsets, hospital, 2nd line transport, supply column, main body; four companies Dorsets, two companies 13th Mounted Infantry, two guns R.F.A., rearguard; Gough's Mounted Infantry, Colt guns, pom-pom, flying column on left flank; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank to column; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank to column.

July 28.—Malane Kraal. Column moved at 6.30, south-south-west as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry right advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns rearguard; 13th Mounted Infantry and pom-pom flying column on left flank; 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. on right flank.

July 29.—Main column moved at 7 a.m.; reached Villiersdorp about 11. Thirteenth here joined our main body south side of Vaal River. Marched another two and a half miles south-west and halted and camped at 4 p.m. at Alleman's Home on the spruit. Ambulance of 13th Mounted Infantry was fired upon by four Boers; one man was wounded and one mule killed. On the whole it was a good day's work.

August 1.—Van Reenan's Kop. Reveille at 6. The main column moved at 8, and we moved at 8.30 to join them. Before Colonel Jenner's column joined we marched as follows: 13th Mounted Infantry with

waggons, 14th Mounted Infantry finding guards, one and a half companies (forty men) being right flank guard. Main column moved as follows, due west: One company 13th Mounted Infantry advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. rearguard.

Well, we proceeded to join the main column, which was moving due west towards Wilge River, I being in charge of the right flank. We came then into touch with the rearguard to the main column, who were being sniped. Captain Nott (King's Royal Rifles, Gough's Mounted Infantry) here asked me to help him, as he and his company were going to lie low in the farm to surprise the Boers who were likely to come on; and he wanted me to screen the guns and also cover his retreat. I was also to hide my men and the guns (two 15-pounders, 74th Battery). I did so on a big burnt depression of the ground. Nott had 100 men with him. Well, Nott's post came in at the gallop, and the whole place looked as if we had left altogether. Nineteen to twenty Boers came up (this is Nott's story; I could not see) to within 100 yards of the farm. Unfortunately one man let off his rifle too soon, and the Boers took alarm and galloped off; however, they wounded four of them badly. Directly I heard the firing I moved out. Nott then retired at the gallop, with several Boers following. I let drive at these fellows, and with the second volley dropped one man and a horse. It was a great pity, as it might have been so successful. I must here say that I had previously written over to the Commanding Officer and asked for permission to help Nott, which was granted. After this the guns shelled eighty or ninety Boers who were following on the left rear, coming out of the Nek in Van Reenan's Kop. Well, we then went on as rearguard, I looking after the right rear, sniping and counter-sniping proceeding all along. Just before

crossing the Wilge River we had a fairly long halt, to permit the waggons to cross. I had one of my posts at a kraal about 1,500 yards on my right rear. They had quite a little scrap with six Boers, and I am glad to say they took one. Here we crossed the Wilge River, Nott covering my retirement. I covered his and guns. We then marched into camp, two and a half miles west of Leeuwbank Drift (the drift we crossed by), reaching camp at 4. A good day's work: five Boers and no casualties to us, which more than balances the three men hit yesterday. I reported to Colonel Jenner and Major Bridgeford on arrival in camp, and had tea with the latter.

August 2.—The column remains halted to-day here, at Avondozon (Klip River). Reveille at 6. No. 1 Company find vedettes; 13th Mounted Infantry and Gough's Mounted Infantry patrols of fifty men each, to reconnoitre the banks of Klip River. A lovely day; usual camp duties. Two forces move at 11 p.m. and 3 a.m. as follows: 5th Corps 13th Mounted Infantry, 14th Mounted Infantry, pom-pom, under Colonel Jenner, proceed to Frankfort at 11; Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery (Major Gough) go back to Wilge River and search banks at 3.

No. 1 Company, unfortunately, are on outpost, so MacLean and I and fifty men have to remain behind. Very unfortunate. Thirteenth Mounted Infantry leave thirty men and Gough's Mounted Infantry fifty men behind.

I dined with Nott of the King's Royal Rifles (Gough's Mounted Infantry), and had a most enjoyable evening. Is not the world small? Lewis (late C.I.V. M.I.) is his subaltern. Brass went at 11 with twenty-eight men. Either he or I had to remain behind, so we tossed up, and he won. MacLean was on outpost. A lovely moonlight night.

August 3.—Avondozon. Reveille at 5. The main column moves as follows: Fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry advanced guard; twenty-five men 13th

Mounted Infantry right flank guard; and two guns R.F.A. rearguard. I was in charge of the rearguard. The column marched in south-west direction. I picketed hills till all had moved off. An uneventful march of twelve miles, except for killing the live-stock left behind. No enemy.

After a long, tedious march halted and camped at Lubbe. As we came into camp Colonel Jenner came back with his force from Frankfort. They reached there at daybreak, and completely surprised the Boers. Captured 20 waggons, 19 Cape-carts, 3,000 oxen, 34 prisoners (armed), men, women, and children, 5,000 sheep, and horses, etc. Frankfort was burnt to the ground. To all accounts this was a marvellous sight. Lieutenant Torkington, of the 13th Mounted Infantry, did very well by capturing a laager on his own bat; and the whole thing was a great success to all concerned. I do wish I had been there! However, one can't have everything. Jenner's column must have done about forty or fifty miles. The company turned out top speed at 5 to bring in Provost-Marshal, as he was being sniped bringing in sheep. I went out, but the Boers had decamped. Returned at 6.30.

August 4.—Lubbe. Reveille at 5.30. The column marched at 7.30 west-north-west to Gravenhage (eight miles) as follows: Two companies 13th Mounted Infantry advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry rearguard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 2) left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1), fifty men 13th Mounted Infantry (No. 1), fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry, and pom-pom form flying column on right flank and proceed through Aanshoek, Wolvefontein, Klip River to Gravenhage, under Captain Brass.

I had, consequently, charge of the company. MacLean took advanced guard and I right flank and Klip River. It was a clear, lovely day; we only saw a very few Boers, and met with desultory sniping. We destroyed 300 sacks of mealies, and got 600 sheep

and 90 horses (foals and mares). Took in three Boer families. Joined main column at Gravenhage.

August 5.—Gravenhage. Reveille at 4.30. Marched off to Heilbron (fourteen miles). A hot, fine day; an uneventful march over old familiar country. We reached Heilbron at 2 p.m., and halted and camped on east side. Rimington's and Plumer's columns are here. Both have done well, and have cleared the country. Gough's column joined as well to-day. He also made a splendid bag at the Wilge River and got 4,000 oxen, 40 waggons, 19 Cape-carts, 8,000 sheep, horses and Boer families.

So General Spens' first trek has been highly successful, and he well deserves it. Majors Bridgeford and Pratt and Colonel Jenner and Major Gough have all been also very successful. I rode into Heilbron; nothing there. A terrible place this for dead horses and bad water.

August 6.—Heilbron. We trekked off due south-west at 1 p.m. as follows: One company 13th Mounted Infantry advanced guard; fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank guard; fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; fifty men 13th Mounted Infantry rearguard.

A hot afternoon, and an uneventful march of seven miles. We halted and camped at 5 p.m. At 11.45 the following troops moved out south-west as follows: 13th Mounted Infantry, 14th Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery, pom-pom, under Colonel Jenner; Gough's Mounted Infantry, Colt guns, under Major Gough. It was a clear, moonlight night.

Objective: to round up a Boer laager and work in co-operation with Rimington on our left and Gough on our right. Crossed the Rhenoster River at 2 a.m.

August 7.—Proceeded to Zwakfontein on Heilbron-Kroonstad road, and then swung round to the left, or south, as far as Tulbagh, which we reached at 5 a.m., having so far marched twenty miles. Here Vassall's company (Gloucesters), who were advanced guard, were

sent out to surround two farms near Rietkuil. At 6 a.m. we halted, and MacLean became advanced guard with half a company (No. 1). Heavy firing was heard in Vassall's direction. It was just getting light. Cape-carts and Boer waggons were reported. The Major sent me with three sections (seventy men) to go after them. We had galloped about three miles when I met Colonel Jenner, who told me to go no further than a long, high ridge two miles to my left front, as there were 400 or 500 Boers in close proximity (De Wet's commando). I occupied this hill, where Brass joined me. I heard Rimington's guns on my left. Here I pushed forward to a large farm, one mile from me and three miles from a long, stony ridge of four miles occupied by the enemy. Reached farm and burnt it, being sniped the whole time pretty freely. At 7 a.m. the whole of Jenner's column swung to the right to Welgelegen, where they came in contact with Rimington's force. I went back to the high ridge, and rejoined Brass. In the hollow were nine Cape-carts and two ox-waggons, which we captured together with eight Boer women, innumerable children, and one Boer prisoner, also 800 oxen and 700 sheep, horses, and mules. We sent these on. Three Cape-carts could not be persuaded to go, so I changed the horses. At 9 a.m. about thirty or forty Boers came up to within 2,000 yards, and started firing at me. I had only thirty men, but Brass covered me from the ridge. It was altogether very funny; I could not get the blessed carts to go on, so I cleared off the men and boys. But the women, who were very fat and huge, refused to get out of the carts. Our friends all the time were peppering us. Well, I got some of the Tommies to help, and we forcibly got the women off, although they kicked like blazes, and were not at all decorous in their behaviour. Then, the carts being lighter, we got them to shove along, and made the women shove along too. All retired on to main body. The slowness of our little capture caused several delays, and kept us fighting a

little rearguard action with quite 100 to 150 Boers, who followed us most persistently. I am glad to say we had no casualties. I joined main column (Jenner's) at 2. Rimington captured eighty Boers, fourteen Cape-carts, and three waggons, which we drove on to him. Colonel Jenner himself this morning at first dawn rode down and captured one Boer. Our bag resulted in twelve Cape-carts, four waggons, 800 oxen, 900 sheep, seventy-five horses, fifteen mules, nine prisoners (armed), men, women, and children.

Altogether it was a most successful reconnaissance, and reflected great credit on Colonel Jenner and all concerned. We joined the main column at Paardekraal after a march of twelve miles. The men and horses had no rest, and must have done from forty to fifty miles—eighteen hours in the saddle.

August 10.—Paarde Kraal. Main column moved as follows: Fifty men 14th Mounted Infantry advanced guard; fifty men 13th Mounted Infantry rearguard; twenty-five men Gough's Mounted Infantry on each flank.

Reveille at 5. Moved off at 7 towards Kroonstad. A most beautiful day; an uneventful march of six miles in charge of advanced guard. Reached camp at 12. No enemy. Gough in action on left flank with 150 Boers. No casualties. I went out on outpost with my men, and guarded south-west, west, north-west entrance to camp. All quiet. Jenner's force returned at 6 p.m., after having worked back (east) from last camp, then north, then south-west. They captured 400 oxen, and had a slight action with 80 or 100 Boers. One horse was shot and two Boers killed. Our casualties nil.

14th Mounted Infantry, 5th Corps,
Kroonstad, August 13, 14, and 15.

The column remained halted here during these three days, with the usual camp duties and routine. I

got fifty remounts here for the battalion. Kroonstad is very little altered since I was last here a year ago. Nott of the King's Royal Rifles (Gough's Mounted Infantry) dined with us on the 14th.

August 16.—Reveille at 5. The column marched south-east towards Lindley as follows, at 7 a.m.: Two guns R.H.A., one company Gough's Mounted Infantry advanced guard; two guns R.H.A., one company Gough's Mounted Infantry rearguard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) left flank. Elswick gun, 2nd Dorsets, two guns J Battery, F Section pom-pom, Gough's Mounted Infantry, 13th Mounted Infantry, 14th Mounted Infantry, Royal Engineers (searchlight), Royal Engineers, convoy and baggage, main body.

Again we are marching over old familiar ground. The advanced guard and 13th Mounted Infantry came in contact with some Boer patrols. Gough's Mounted Infantry had two men taken prisoners. We marched eight miles, then halted and camped at mid-day at Kranspruit. At 2 p.m. orders came out for a night march on Lindley (forty miles), the following force to go at 4.30 p.m.: 13th Mounted Infantry (Major Pratt); 14th Mounted Infantry (Major Bridgeford); Gough's Mounted Infantry (Major Gough); F. Section pom-pom, two guns J Battery (Captain Bailey). All under Colonel Jenner.

Well, we started. No. 1 Company was advanced guard (MacLean scouting, myself in support). It was a lovely afternoon, and there was a glorious sunset. We alternately trotted and walked till dusk. Then came a long night march. It was very cold—freezing! At about midnight we went for a farm where lights were burning; the Boers had hastily evacuated it.

March to Lindley, August 17.—We marched on with very few halts. At 1 a.m. we passed through Doornkloof—a very awkward place, with hills on one side and river on the other—safe and sound. We marched about three and a half miles an hour. It was bitterly

cold. At first dawn, 5 a.m., we reached the Lindley Hills. Gough went round and made a détour round the north side of Lindley. No. 3 Company 14th Mounted Infantry held hills west of Lindley. I held hills south of Lindley. To reach my destination I had to gallop through Lindley. I found no one there. A cold frosty morning with a glowing sunrise. The force marched forty miles in twelve and a half hours, a very fine performance for a nightmarch.

Received orders to join Brass in Lindley, leaving one section on hills south of the town. I did so. Lindley was then burnt and razed to the ground. Every house, every shed, church, gaol, town hall, private residences, all burnt.

At 11 a.m. all had orders to rejoin Jenner on the hills west of Lindley, where our main body was. Here we had our first welcome rest and fed our tired horses. At 12 the whole force moved, and encamped at west end of Quaggafontein Hills (north-west of Lindley). Gough's Mounted Infantry camped in the town, and completed Lindley's destruction. Although we caught no one (and we were after De Wet and Steyn), yet we did good work towards ending the war.

A welcome rest. A lovely hot day. Dinner at 7, under a starlit sky, and by a huge camp-fire.

August 18.—Quaggafontein, Lindley. Reveille at 6. Colonel Jenner's column moved at 2 p.m. to rejoin main column four miles off Paardeplaats. The main column did a long march yesterday of about twenty-two miles. We joined them at four o'clock. The whole force is camped here. MacLean and forty-eight men are on outpost, on hills west section of camp. Dinner at 7. In the middle of dinner we heard heavy firing from west, where MacLean was. We immediately rushed out and fell in with the company, then proceeded out towards MacLean. Firing was still going on, both Mausers and Lee-Metfords. Very dark, and stiff, broken country. On reaching MacLean the Boers had gone off. Singularly enough, MacLean

heard horses' hoofs coming along, so he went up to the sentry, and the sentry challenged. The reply came back, 'Friend.' MacLean then saw about sixty or seventy men leading horses, only 120 yards to his right. Immediately afterwards he called for the whole of his post to stand to and come up, and at the same time he came in for a heavy fire. He at once replied. No sooner had the sentry challenged than the men, who were undoubtedly a party of Boers, mounted and galloped off, whilst another party fired and covered them. It was evidently a surprise, and not a premeditated attack. Luckily nobody was hit, as it was a pretty dark night. I went off and visited the other posts, which reported all correct. MacLean's post was strengthened by eight more men. All then returned to camp. The night was so dark that it took one and a half hours to get in, owing to hills, dongas and spruits.

August 19.—Paardeplaats. Reveille at 6. The force remained halted to-day. In the afternoon I went for a swim, and afterwards had some shooting. Good sport.

August 20.—Reveille at 5. The force moved at 7 as follows: No. 2 Company 14th Mounted Infantry advanced guard to main column; No. 3 Company 14th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; No. 4 Company 14th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry rearguard, with two guns R.F.A.; Gough's Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery flying column on right flank; pom-pom, 13th Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery flying column on left flank. I was in charge of rearguard scouts, MacLean supports. Gough's Mounted Infantry had a running fight all day with 300 Boers; 13th Mounted Infantry had small skirmishes, and got 3,000 sheep and oxen. The column had an uneventful march of about twelve miles east on the Reitz road. A hot, fine day. We had many halts, owing to several drifts; finally reached camp at 3 p.m.

August 21.—Lovedale, on tributary Valsch River. Reveille at 5. Moved off east towards Reitz at 7.15 a.m.: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. rearguard. A fine, bright day. Only marched five or six miles, owing to possible night operations, and halted and camped at 10. Orders were to march at 10.45 p.m. to a camp called Lamplaats. The following force went: Gough's Mounted Infantry (Major Gough); 13th Mounted Infantry (Major Pratt); 14th Mounted Infantry (Major Bridgeford) J Battery (four guns); F Section pom-pom. All under Colonel Jenner. It was a cold, fine, bright night. We marched in above order. The objective: to round up 200 or 300 Boers known to be in some hills south-east, and possibly a laager.

August 22.—Line of march. After a tedious march of fifteen miles we reached our destination at first dawn. Gough's Mounted Infantry pushed out along a succession of ridges to the west-south-west; the 13th Mounted Infantry pushed out to the east-south-east; and Nos. 3 and 4 Companies took a middle course. All the above actually came in contact with 200 or 300 Boers, who bolted as hard as they could go under a heavy fire from us. Their laager, unfortunately, had gone off two days ago. However, we got several of their led horses, oxen and sheep. My company and No. 2 were in reserve with two guns R.H.A., I myself holding the highest peak and ridge, viz. Louwkop. The country at this point is very high and broken, lying from four to five miles south of Reitz (Lindley road). Had a laager been here it would have undoubtedly been captured, as the general co-operation of all concerned was very good. At 10 a.m. all rendezvoused at a farm, and halted till the main column arrived. At 1.30 it arrived some three-quarters

of a mile west of us, and all marched into camp, reaching same at 2.30 p.m. The camp is most picturesquely situated in a shallow depression on a plateau surrounded by rocky ridges. To the south one has a magnificent stretch of country, and one can see the distant mountains of Basutoland, Naauwpoort Nek, Retief Nek (where Prinsloo was so well cornered-up by Hunter), and the Biddelsberg by Senekal.

August 23.—Elandsfontein. Kaffir Kop. Reveille at 6. The main column moved due west as follows at 8.15 a.m.: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) right flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns rearguard. Two flying columns go out on each R.F.A. flank as follows, and start at 7 a.m.: Two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry on left flank; one company 13th Mounted Infantry and one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) right flank, under Captain Brass.

Well, we started at 7. MacLean was on the extreme right, and I was with our right flank (main body). We proceeded to Valsch River, south-east of Lindley, and burnt a farm belonging to De Wet's uncle. Dorrien-Smith, nephew to General Smith-Dorrien, came with us to assist, the Provost-Marshal bringing empty waggons and fifty black boys to round up stock. We brought in women and children, and I reconnoitred the banks of Valsch River, but found them all clear. I then went on reconnoitring, and sent in to Brass fifty horses with some sheep and oxen. I got some large supplies of mealies from the Kaffir kraals, which are very well supplied in this neighbourhood. It was a beautiful, warm day. I returned to camp at 4, having got one family, 300 oxen, 1,000 sheep, 170 horses, two loads of mealies. Gough also got supplies from left flank. The main column had an uneventful march of three miles only, as it had to cross Valsch River. There are signs of rain to-night.

August 24.—Klipfontein, eight miles south-south-east of Lindley. Reveille at 5. Moved at 7 as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. rearguard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 2 and 3) right flank guard; two companies 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard. A cold, wet, rainy day. By the way, De Wet caught one of Gough's men the day before yesterday, and sent him back to the General with the following message: 'On account of your burning Lindley, I will in future shoot any officer or sergeant who falls as prisoner in my hands.'

We had an uneventful march of ten miles, and halted and camped at Kroon Spruit (Bloemberg). The 13th Mounted Infantry had a skirmish on the left flank, and captured one Boer, but had four horses shot. Wet and cold winds all day.

August 25.—Kroon Spruit, Bloemberg. Reveille at 5. A bitterly cold and wet morning. The force moved north-west at 7 as follows: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) right flank guard; two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry and pom-pom left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. rearguard. The weather became worse, and we had terrific thunderstorms, with rain and hail, and a bitterly cold wind. I was in charge of right flank scouts and supports. I had a running skirmish with a few sniping Boers. I am glad to say I rounded up 2,000 Boer sheep, which I sent in. I shot 30 oxen and 7 horses, and destroyed, at farms occupied by Boers this morning, foodstuffs, mealies, flour, etc. Very heavy rain and wonderful thunderstorms. The country is undulating, but very broken. The column marched about eight miles, and halted and camped at 2 on high ground. All were very wet and cold. The weather cleared up; we had a clear, cold, windy, moonlight night.

August 26.—Spitzkop. Reveille at 5. The force moved at 7.15 west-north-west as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. rearguard; two companies Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. left flank guard; 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns 74th Battery flying column on right flank, which is hilly, broken country. The main column on leaving Spitzkop came in for some heavy sniping.

We proceeded due north towards Valsch River. No. 1 Company was advanced guard to the right flanking column; MacLean was at first in charge of advanced scouts, then, when we changed direction a bit, I took out twenty-five men as scouts. I crossed the Valsch River at Kleinfontein, there being a big farm here with a stiff ridge beyond. We got sniped here, so galloped up and took possession of the highest point of the ridge. In the meantime our guns were shelling some twenty or thirty retiring Boers on the right, or east. As soon as I reached the top of the hill, I saw 500 or 600 head of cattle being trekked off by Boers 3,000 yards to my left front, also fifty or sixty Boers on my left and twenty or thirty on my right. I had too few men to go on, so fired on both sides for all I was worth, and sent in a report to Colonel Jenner. After waiting about an hour, supports came up. I marked the point where the cattle were sent. All then went forward, and I, with Colonel Jenner's permission, went after the cattle; general direction north-west towards Doornkloof. I galloped for three miles, and sighted some of the cattle. I then rounded them up (about 200 head), and had to put most of my men to cover them, as I was being badly sniped all round. I got them safe over a ridge, and then formed a position, and waited. About twenty or thirty Boers came up to within 1,200 yards, and I could see 200 or 300 two miles off on the right. I said to myself, 'Let them have it hot and strong!'

About ten minutes later Jenner and Bridgeford came up with supports. All then went forward towards Eland Spruit under cover, and I reconnoitred the country to our left. The main column came upon 200 or 300 Boers here, and everybody, including guns, fired on them. The Boers, who were under Commandant Kabe, legged it towards Doornkloof, a strong position. The force remained where it was, to rest horses, and off-saddled.

Groenfontein. After halting one hour, Colonel Jenner's force proceeded back to the main body, which had halted and camped at Olievenfontein, about eight or nine miles south-south-west of us. The column went thirteen or fifteen miles, while right flank column went twenty or twenty-five miles, and took in three families. I reached camp at 4 p.m., after capturing 400 or 500 head of cattle, sheep, horses, and collecting large quantities of mealies, flour and foodstuffs. On the whole, it may be called a successful day. Lovely warm weather. No. 1 Company are outpost. I went out with thirty-six men and covered, then to west section of camp. A cold, moonlight night. All clear.

August 27.—Olievenfontein. Reveille at 6. The force remains halted to-day. I stood to arms at 5 a.m.; all clear. Was relieved at 6.15 by vedettes, and then returned to camp. A foraging party went out at 10 to collect mealies and foodstuffs from neighbouring kraals and farms, returning at 1. A fine warm day.

August 28.—Reveille at 4. The force moved west-north-west towards Kroonstad as follows: Fifty men 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 2 Company) advanced guard; fifty men 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. rearguard; fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank guard; fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard.

The two following flying columns started at 6 a.m., and worked as follows: 13th Mounted Infantry and 14th Mounted Infantry on right flank searching banks of Valsch River; two guns R.H.A., under Colonel

Jenner, D.S.O.; Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. on left flank, under Major Gough.

We started and worked due north towards Valsch River. No. 3 Company was advanced guard. I was in charge of right flank guard and supports. Reached Valsch River at 9 after a long, uneventful march of twenty-five miles round to Wonderkop, where the main column halted. I sent in ninety horses and 100 sheep, with mealies and foodstuffs. I had slight skirmishes with thirty or fifty Boers, who kept a very respectful distance, and reached the main column at 4. Gough's Mounted Infantry on the left flank had a rather exciting day. They sighted a retreating Boer convoy five miles off. Captain Dick's Company (Irish Fusiliers) galloped after them at full tilt, Clifton Wallace leading. Five Boers suddenly got up and bolted. Unfortunately it was a trap. De Wet was apparently here, and had a ridge lined, as well as sixty Boers in a Kaffir kraal. Wallace went after the five Boers, but suddenly came in for a terrific fire at 500 yards. Poor Wallace was killed outright by an expanding bullet (big hole in back) and four saddles were cleared. Mildmay's company in support sent two groups out as scouts, and followed behind. All scuppered, and, besides, another fourteen saddles were cleared. Dick then came up, and the Boers legged it. Unfortunately nobody else came up, so the enemy were allowed to get off with waggons. Four Boers killed, eight to fourteen Boers wounded; Clifton Wallace killed, four men killed, fourteen men wounded (two since dead).

The corporal and eight men taken prisoners report that the Boer commandant said, had he been an officer, he would have shot him, and that 'he would teach us to send out our damned proclamations.' (Kitchener of Khartoum's proclamation: Any Boer found in arms after September 15 to be banished for life.)

For some inexplicable reason Mahan—in charge of the two guns, J Battery—refused to shell the Boers in

Kaffir kraal at 2,500 yards. He must have thought them our own men. It was most unfortunate. Gough's Mounted Infantry are a clinking good lot, under a splendid leader.

August 29. — Wonderkop. Reveille at 5. The column moved towards Kroonstad at 7 a.m. as follows: Two guns R.H.A. and fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; two guns R.F.A and one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 2) rearguard. An uneventful march of fourteen miles to five miles east of Kroonstad, where we halted and camped at 3 p.m. The day both fine and warm.

August 30.—Keriba, near Kroonstad. Reveille at 6; breakfast at 8. Rode to Kroonstad for stores, etc. Rimington's column is here, which leaves to-night at 5.30 p.m. The Yeomanry left Rimington's column, some six or eight weeks ago, at Platrand. Rimington has done some good work; he has a very fine, mobile column, composed of 800 Bushmen, 360 Inniskillings, 100 Canadian Scouts, four guns R.H.A., pom-pom, four companies of the 'Queen's.' No news. The war is wearing on. We trek the day after to-morrow. I lunched at the station with several fellows of both columns. Returned to camp. Only got two remounts per company to-day; more to-morrow. Lovely hot weather.

Captured by Brigadier-General Spens' column on march between Heidelberg and Kroonstad, July 29 to August 12, 1901: 52 prisoners, 2 surrendered Boers, 48 rifles, 1,460 rounds small-arms ammunition, 375 women and children, 752 horses, 4,716 cattle, 29,000 sheep, 91 waggons, 97 ploughs, 123 Cape-carts, 26 mules, 153 tons mealies, 12½ tons forage.

Result of trek between August 16 and August 30, 1901, by Brigadier-General Spens' column: 1 prisoner, 6 surrendered Boers; 2,325 cattle, 30,000 sheep, 563 horses, 15 mules captured; 147 ploughs, 27 waggons destroyed.

Meriba, six miles south-east of Kroonstad.

August 31.—Reveille at 6. A fine, warm day. Usual camp duties.

September 1.—Reveille at 5. The column trekked south-east at 7.15 a.m. Order of march: One company 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry, right flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. rearguard. A beautiful hot, clear day. We marched along the Kroonstad-Lindley road as far as Wonderkop, then turned due south towards Senekal, and halted and camped at 3.45 p.m. at Klampje Doorns. An uneventful march, on the whole. The general idea as follows, four columns working:

Kroonstad.

Wilson's column, 400 men. *Lindley.*

Spens' column, 2,000 men.

Rimington's column, 1,600 men.

Boers.

Elliot's column.

Senekal.

Rimington's column left Kroonstad at 5.30 p.m. on August 30. Wilson's column left same place at 4 p.m. on August 31. All these columns are working together; it is really another effort to round up De Wet and other commandos, and, of course, it may prove successful. We heard Rimington's and Elliot's guns all day to-day. I heard to-day that Vandeleur, of the Irish Guards, with forty-two men, were blown up on the railway near Pietersburg by the Boers. Alas! that seventy men of the Black Watch should have been taken prisoners near Brandfort.

September 2.—Klampje Doorns. Reveille at 3.45.

The column moved at 6.15 south-south-east, on Senekal road as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. advanced guard; 100 men Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank guard; fifty men Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; fifty men and pom-pom rearguard.

Thirteenth and 14th Mounted Infantry and four guns J Battery flying column on right flank, under Colonel Jenner, to act in co-operation with Wilson's and Rimington's columns, to round up Haasbruck's convoy, known to be north of Zand River.

We started at 5 a.m. and marched due south. No. 1 Company was advanced guard; MacLean was in command of scouts. Marched some twelve miles through a place called Kaffir Kraals to a long ridge commanding a big sweep of country due south at Roodepoort. The 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns were on the right, at Bloemhoek. Here we halted. MacLean sent in a report to the effect that two Boers were driving sheep to southwards. Battalions and guns came up. The 13th Mounted Infantry on the right were having a running skirmish. Both battalions burnt several farms. Large quantities of oxen and sheep, and many other signs, show the recent movements of the enemy. No. 1 Company had orders to hold and picket the ridge previously mentioned. As soon as the battalion reached the ridge, all went forward. Waggons and carts reported. All then deployed, and made a gallop forward under pretty general sniping, 13th also galloping on the right. We went as hard as we could for eight miles, and secured oxen, waggons, horses, etc. Proceeded, and came to a stiff ridge covered with rocks and trees, and held by the enemy. Dismounted, and opened fire, as also did two guns J Battery. The Boers were seen to get away. All mounted, and galloped on to the top of the ridge. Again we dismounted, and opened fire on the retreating Boers. Once more we mounted and rode on, capturing more waggons, oxen, etc. Then we sighted

a Boer convoy five miles off, trekking south. Unfortunately the 13th had been impeded in their forward movement by some fifty to eighty well-posted Boers, and two companies of the 14th were left with the captures and to cover our rear, which was being threatened. Only Nos. 1 and 3 Companies were left to go on. On we galloped, with two guns J Battery coming on. A devil of a chase! We came in for the enemy's fire from flanking ridges. Then we halted at a ridge 3,000 or 4,000 yards from the convoy, and opened rifle and shell fire on it; shell burst up a waggon. Colonels Jenner and Bridgeford here rode up and joined my position, which was on the right, and nearest the convoy. Unfortunately no supports were up yet, and the convoy was sheltered by ridges on each side covered with Boers; we had too few men to go on. However, we were all full of blood and eager to get in. The word was given to go on. I mounted my men, Cooke's company in the centre, Brass and the remainder of No. 1 Company on extreme left, when suddenly fifty or sixty Boers got up out of a donga 2,500 yards to our left front, and galloped up to another ridge. This settled it! We dismounted, and contented ourselves with shelling the convoy, which had got off. An hour later the 13th got up, went after the disabled waggons and two herds of oxen left by the enemy, and succeeded in their object, well under the enemy's fire. The horses were too done to continue; so all rendezvoused at a farm at Potgieter laager, watered horses, off-saddled, and fed. Then we rounded up our captures and went back to camp, a long weary march of twenty-five miles north-north-east back. I was advanced guard. It seemed an endless march! We reached camp at last at 10 p.m., after having gone sixty miles—seventeen hours in the saddle! Hilton rode down and captured a Boer. Our haul was as follows: 22 waggons, 5 armed prisoners, 3 unarmed prisoners, 900 to 1,000 cattle, women and children; huge quantities of mealies, wheat-flour, food-

stuffs, etc. Three of our men were taken prisoners and released minus rifle, horse, etc. Five Boers were wounded.

September 3.—Blaauwbank (Kroonstad-Senekal road). Reveille at 6. The column moved off at 9 a.m. south-west as follows: Gough's Mounted Infantry finding all guards to column, 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry and J Battery moving quietly along with main column to rest their horses. It was a fine, hot day. We had an uneventful march of ten miles. To-day we heard the welcome intelligence that Rimington's column have captured 50 waggons and 17 prisoners of Haasbruck's commando, also that Wilson has captured 7 waggons. Encamped at 2.

September 4.—Tagersrust. Reveille at 5. Moved at 7.15 south-south-west as follows: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard: one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 2 and 3) right flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. rear-guard.

We marched over the same ground as on September 2. It was a fine but windy day. We had an uneventful march of eight miles. On nearing camp we came upon three Boer waggons, full of supplies, which were burnt.

The natives informed us that a Boer convoy of fifty waggons had gone south-south-east, and that it was about twenty-five miles on. Gough's Mounted Infantry went after these at once; their transport follows them. We camped here at 11. Orders issued for night-march. Main column remains halted.

September 5.—Wiljegund (Ventersburg-Senekal road). Thirteenth and 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns J Battery, under Colonel Jenner, moved off south-south-west at 12.45 a.m., in reconnaissance in conjunction with Wilson's small column. A fine, warm, moonlight night. We marched about twelve miles across the Zand River, and through the Doornberg to

Druipfontein. An uneventful march. Crossed *Z*and River at daylight, 6 a.m. No enemy; all clear. Most beautiful scenery. Encamped four miles south of *Z*and River at 10 a.m. Two Boers smartly captured by one of the vedettes, otherwise nothing! In the afternoon I went shooting through the bush on the *Z*and River with Brass. We had fair sport. It was a brilliant, hot day, and a lovely sunset; a wonderful country, too. To south and south-west were the mountains of Basutoland, the hills near Winburg, and Thaba 'Nchu Mountain. I hear from the prisoners that Elliot's column captured forty waggons and killed four Boers, Haasbruck being severely wounded; also that on the 2nd we killed four Boers at Potgieter laager. Haasbruck's column was pretty well wiped out. De Wet, 300 men, and one gun are reported to be twenty miles south-east of us.

September 6.—Druipfontein, *Z*and River. Reveille at 6. Moved off north-north-east at 7.15, 13th Mounted Infantry finding guards to convoy, 14th Mounted Infantry working independently on left flank. A hot, windy, threatening day. We brought in some families, but otherwise had a very uneventful march of about twelve miles; only very distant Boers to be seen. Wilson's column is working in co-operation. We halted and camped at 3.

September 7.—Quaggafontein, Mazel Spruit. Reveille at 5. Moved off at 7 east-north-east, to rejoin the main body as follows: 14th Mounted Infantry guarding waggons with two guns R.H.A.; 13th Mounted Infantry working independently on the right. A hot, fine day. We walked across and along the banks of *Z*and River, and afterwards Kool Spruit, bringing in families. The Boers again kept at a very respectful distance. We rejoined the main column at, or near, Wiljegund, having marched about eighteen miles, at 4 p.m.

I went over to see Nott and Lewis (Gough's Mounted Infantry) to hear their news. They started the same day as we did, at 1 in the afternoon, after the waggons

I mentioned. After going seventeen miles north-west we came upon them at 4.30. They had captured thirty waggons and Cape-carts, and many women and children, and had taken four prisoners. Curiously enough, they ran into Rimington's column, and each took the other for Boers. Rimington put seven shells into Nott's company, and there was a good deal of firing on both sides, but luckily no casualties. A vedette, on going out from this camp, was entrapped by six Boers, who fired at and mortally wounded one man; the others got off. Otherwise no news.

Rimington has captured 50 waggons and Cape-carts, oxen, 19 prisoners, and many women and children.

Brass shot two magnificent springbok to-day, and two ostriches were also shot. Colonel Jenner's column only went out on spec; however, the country we went through was well cleared up. Besides we captured some Boers.

Captures made by Major Gough: 18 waggons and oxen, 29 Cape-carts and horses, 4 prisoners, 500 cattle.

Captures made by the column: 48 waggons and oxen, 34 Cape-carts and horses, 9 prisoners, 3 surrenders, 1,600 cattle, 13,000 sheep, 400 horses.

Captures made by Rimington's column: 64 waggons and oxen, 22 Cape-carts and horses, 18 prisoners, 1,100 head of cattle.

Captures made by Colonel Wilson's column: 7 waggons and oxen, 800 cattle, 7 Boers killed.

We make things as happy as possible for the Boer women. To-day we asked them to coffee, cake, and biscuits (Huntley and Palmer, not ration), and twenty-four came!

September 8.—Wiljegund. Reveille at 5. Column marched at 7.15 due north as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.F.A. rearguard.

It was a hot, windy day, and we had an uneventful march of about twelve or thirteen miles through the rolling veldt. A most amusing incident on the march is when a hare gets up followed by five or six smart greyhounds, and behind these are some fifty dogs of all sorts—curs, mongrels, puppies, and hounds—some belonging to the men, and some simply following the column. The greyhounds generally kill, whilst all the others run 100 yards or so, and then come back, hugely delighted with themselves. We halted and camped at 4 p.m.

September 9.—Klipfontein. Reveille at 5. The column marched due north at 7.15 as follows: One company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) and two guns R.H.A., advanced guard: one company 13th Mounted Infantry, right flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. rearguard. Two guns 74th Battery joined Wilson's column (400 Kitchener's Fighting Scouts) on September 5. I was corps orderly officer, and had therefore the unpleasant job of dismounted men and prisoners of the corps.

A hot, windy day, and an uneventful march of fifteen miles due north through undulating, monotonous veldt. The veldt, however, is beginning to change colour, from the burnt-up yellow grass and black to a brilliant green, and here and there a few flowers are coming up, telling of advancing spring. We encamped on the Valsch River, at Wolvekop, at 4 p.m. To-day we heard the following cheerful news from Ventersburg Road Station: 'On 5th inst. Colonel Scobell's (Scots Greys) column, assisted by Midland Mounted Rifles, who held the pass, captured the whole of Lotter's and Breedts' commandos near Petersburg, Cape Colony.' Nineteen were killed, 104 taken prisoners, none escaped, and all their belongings fell into our hands, including 25,000 rounds small-arms ammunition and 200 horses. The prisoners included Commandants Lotter and Breedts, Field-Cornets Kruger, W. Kruger, and Schieman. Amongst the

killed were the two Voskers—notable rebels. The only other organized commando in Cape Colony is Scheepers', which is now hard pressed by Methuen. Only about 800 men altogether are in the field in Cape Colony, which, with the exception of Scheepers' commando, are mostly scattered and hiding. This is most satisfactory, and has come at an opportune moment.

September 10.—Wolvekop. Reveille at 5. The force moved at 7.15 as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) left flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. rearguard.

An uneventful march into Kroonstad; a wet, windy, stormy morning. I rode in early with Lewis (Gough's and late C.I.V. M.I.) to get stores and mails.

We hear that the Dorsets leave us, to be replaced by the Black Watch, also that Gough's leave us, to be replaced by Kitchener's Fighting Scouts under Wilson. Gough's entrained for Pretoria to-day. I am very sorry they are going, as I have lots of friends in them; besides, they are as good a lot of Mounted Infantry as one could wish for. Major Gough, their Commanding Officer, was a really first-rate soldier, and immensely popular.

Got stores and went back to camp, two miles south of Kroonstad, at 2. We trek again the day after to-morrow.

Kroonstad.

September 14 *to* 17.—Usual camp duties. Very few Boers have come in on Lord Kitchener's proclamation. I fear that we are in for another year's fighting. We only got a few remounts here, and those were recovered horses from a sick farm. The weather has been cold, wet, and boisterous the whole time, with periodical thunderstorms. On the 16th we gave a dance in Kroonstad to the hospital nurses and a few of the élite

of Kroonstad. It was a most sporting affair altogether. It had poured in torrents all day, but luckily it just cleared up at night. The General came, also the J Battery, and representatives from all branches of the service. The militia, also, came in strong force, gorgeously attired in blue jumpers, blue overalls, patent leathers, and gloves—a picturesque contrast to well-worn, weather-beaten khaki, ammunition boots, and brown scarred hands. It was great fun, and everybody enjoyed themselves immensely; we all felt like schoolboys out for a treat. At 1.30 we said good-night, and the nurses went off in our two ambulance waggons. This sounds funny, but it was the only transport available. I think I wrote that Brass is away on leave, and that I am *pro tem.* officer commanding No. 1 Company.

September 18.—Reveille at 5.30. The column moved at 7.30 as follows: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1), left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) and two guns R.H.A. rearguard.

For some reason or other the Black Watch have not arrived yet, so we are a small column. Wilson and his 350 Kitchener's Fighting Scouts and two guns 74th Battery moved off at 6.30 a.m. independently, but working in co-operation with us. I was in command of left flank guard. It was a lovely, brilliant day, after the bad weather we have had. We had an uneventful march of six miles south-west in the direction of Hoopstadt. We halted and camped at 1 p.m. Then came sudden orders to return to Kroonstad and entrain. Destination unknown! Something evidently on.

September 19.—Eight miles south-south-west of Kroonstad. We were roused at 12 (midnight)—for 14th Mounted Infantry only and Majendie's company 13th Mounted Infantry (the latter company came with us to take over our horses)—and marched back to Kroonstad at 2 a.m. I furnished advanced guard. It

was a dark night; we reached Kroonstad at first dawn (5 a.m.). Proceeded to station, and handed over our horses to Majendie and the remount depot. Entrained. The officers took all their horses and Cape-carts; the regimental transport was also taken. We were sent by three trains in close succession, their destination unknown. Leaving Kroonstad at 10 a.m., I and my company and Cooke's company (No. 3), also Vassall and No. 4 Company, went by the first train. We travelled north. At Viljoen's Drift we heard, to our astonishment and sorrow, that Louis Botha and 1,500 men, with a Creusot, Armstrong, and pom-pom, had attacked De Jager's Drift, between Dundee and Vryheid, with a view of seizing the former place by a night-march; also that our old friends, Gough's Mounted Infantry, had frustrated this, but at the same time had suffered a severe reverse; in fact, they were wiped out. Three officers (Captains Mildmay, Lambton, and Blewitt) were killed, and 5 officers dangerously wounded (Captain Dick amongst these); 14 men killed, 24 men wounded, 250 taken prisoners; two 15-pound and two Colt guns captured.

We were all awfully sorry to hear about it, as we knew Gough's so well. It is terribly rough luck on them, as they have been right through the war from start to finish, and have done so well. However, I suppose, if one goes on long enough, one is bound to get a knock some time or other. Consequently, although our destination is still unknown, we can almost guess that it is Dundee. We reached Elandsfontein at 6 and had dinner, then proceeded to Heidelberg, and thence to Standerton. Several columns are coming down south.

September 20.—Breakfasted at Standerton. It is cold, wet, cheerless weather. Lunched at Volksrust. We went through Laing's Nek and Majuba, and reached Newcastle at 7, where we had dinner. Left there at 10 and proceeded to Dundee.

September 21.—Reached here during the night. At

first dawn we detrained. Breakfasted at the Royal Hotel, and proceeded with detraining. The remainder of 14th Mounted Infantry came in. Camped close to station. A cold, wet, showery day; the rainy season is on. Delightful! Dundee is a very bad place for detraining, and it was very hard work for all concerned; however, everything was safely in by 1 p.m. No fresh news. We await remounts. General Clements is in command here.

September 22.—Dundee. Reveille at 6. I went down to remounts and drew 150 horses for Nos. 1 and 2 Companies. We got ninety of these. Had a busy day branding and shoeing horses; I have another six horses. On the whole they are a good, useful lot, but too big for our work; small horses are the best, about 14 to 15 hands; these big horses want more food than the Government allows them (viz., 10 lb. per horse). At 7 p.m. got orders to move at 9. The transport has been cut down, and they have replaced ox-waggons by mule-waggons. The column moved at 9 as follows: 13th Mounted Infantry advanced guard; J Battery, two guns 7th Battery, three companies Cameron Highlanders main body; 14th Mounted Infantry rear-guard. Object: Louis Botha and 3,000 men are reported to be attempting invasion of Natal by Helpmakaar and on to Ladysmith. Our column under General Spens, in conjunction with Allenby's column (both under General Clements), are sent out to frustrate this. We proceed to pass at Helpmakaar.

A lovely moonlight night. Most magnificent country; the mountains look simply glorious in the moonlight, with the floating, silvery mists surrounding them. The roads are very bad, owing to the recent heavy rains in Natal; consequently the waggons and transport dropped behind.

September 23.—On the march. Marched on till 3.15 a.m. (ten miles) and halted. Three companies of the 13th and two companies of the 14th Mounted Infantry, also two guns J Battery, under Colonel Jenner,

went on, whilst the remainder of the force waited for the waggons. I supplied the right flank guard. There was a most beautiful sunrise as we marched another five miles through fine scenery, and halted at Paardefontein. From here we were only fifteen or twenty miles from Ladysmith, and could see Lombard's Kop, Umbulwana, and all the hills now so historical. Far away to south-west one could see the mighty mountains of Basutoland (Drakensberg), the tops covered with snow, a truly wonderful sight. Natal scenery is very grand. We camped here at 10 o'clock. Owing to the bad state of the roads the waggons came straggling in late at night. It was a hot day; my company was on outpost, Boyd in charge.

September 24.—Paardefontein. Reveille at 5. The column moved at 7 towards Rorke's Drift. A lovely morning. My company was rearguard. No enemy! It is curious trekking in Natal. We marched through glorious, if broken, country for about thirteen miles, then halted and camped at 5. On account of the difficult roads up and down the mountains and through the defiles, we (the rearguard) did not get in till 8.

September 25.—Rorke's Drift, two miles west. Reveille at 5. The column moved off at 7, and marched to Rorke's Drift, Buffalo River. The river was in flood, owing to recent heavy rains. It was very hard work crossing, as the river is fifty to eighty yards wide here, and the stream was quite four miles an hour. There was great excitement in crossing, and still more excitement getting the transport over.

This is all historical country. On the right of the drift, and south-west of it, is the farm where the 24th made such a splendid defence against the Zulus. The column took all day crossing; everybody took off their clothes and gave a hand. It was a fine hot day, and I think everybody, from the General downwards, enjoyed it. What a wonderful world it is, and how beautiful nature can be! Well, the whole column crossed under great difficulties, and only one mule was drowned.

Allenby's column is on our left, and another column on our right. The Boers, under Louis Botha, are to our front (east) about 1,500 strong. Three days ago the *Z*ulus lined the border against the Boers, but after being well shot at and losing several men they were chased back to their kraals. It is a moonlight night after a brilliantly fine day. It may seem extraordinary that I write day after day 'wonderful scenery, wonderful weather,' etc.; but you have no conception what a magnificent life it is.

September 26.—Rorke's Drift, east (Nqutu, *Z*ululand). Reveille at 4.15; a misty morning. The column marches at 6.15 as follows: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. rearguard.

A fine, hot day. An uneventful march of about nine miles due north. Beautiful country; veldt covered with green grass. We encamped at De Vant's Drift at 10.15. MacLean and twenty men of my company took some empty waggons into Dundee for supplies. Rather a small escort. Allenby's column is here composed of: Carbineers, Scots Greys, two guns O Battery R.H.A., pom-pom, and two Maxims.

We are now under General Bruce Hamilton, who is at present in Allenby's camp. Major Gough probably joins our column to-morrow.

September 27.—De Vant's Drift, Buffalo River. Reveille at 6. The force remains halted. Another hot day. We had orders to move at 12 (mid-day); only the Cape-carts to go, all other transports having gone into Dundee for supplies, taking three days' rations for horse and man. Well, owing to short supplies and lack of transport we could only take one and a quarter days' rations, with which we shall have to manage.

The force moved off at 12.15 as follows: One brigade

under Brigadier-General Spens, one brigade under Colonel Allenby; both under General Bruce Hamilton. The remainder of the force, under Colonel Dunlop, R.A., remained behind to bring on the convoy and waggons. Objective: To relieve Fort Prospect, fifty miles south-south-west, which is being attacked by 3,400 Boers under Louis Botha.

We started off, alternately trotting and walking, and passed and left Rorke's Drift on our right. We marched in column through narrow defiles and bad roads over mountains. At 4.30 p.m. we reached Isandhlwana, where the 49th and 24th were cut up by the *Zulus* in 1879. Isandhlwana ('the little hand') is a magnificent hill rising 2,000 feet, with a huge, precipitous rocky top. On the south side the great battle was fought, and our column marched through the battlefield and by the graves of past soldiers, then on over mountains, through defiles. It was a suspiciously stormy-looking night. We had information from *Zulu* runners that the Boers are 4,000 to 5,000 strong, and that an engagement was fought yesterday at Itala.

The column halted at 5 p.m., after having marched, so far, eighteen miles. All the carts were rather late, owing to the bad roads. The column marched off at 9 p.m. through an extremely difficult country, and on till 2 a.m., then halted, having covered thirty-five miles in fourteen hours.

September 28.—Halted for three hours and rested. At dawn moved on again. A cold, misty morning. Confirmation received of big fight at Itala; the Boers under Louis Botha were quite 3,000 to 5,000 strong. Extraordinary! Four *Zulu* impis attacked the Boers four days ago near here, but were driven back. Since then the *Zulus* have been very tame; evidently they have a wholesome respect for the Boer and his Mauser. We moved on over beautiful country, and at 10 p.m. we reached Itala, and saw a very dishevelled camp and apparently a quantity of dead horses. The Carbineers and Scots Greys went on. We camped here at 11 p.m.,

after having marched for twenty-three hours and covered fifty-four miles.

The fight here occurred two days ago, and was a brilliant, and perhaps a heroic, defence. Major Chapman and 5th Divisional Mounted Infantry (300 men), stationed at Fort Prospect, had a post at Itala seven miles away. This post was threatened by a commando of Boers. Major Chapman came to relieve this post, and camped at Itala. At 2 a.m. the Boers attacked from all sides, and one post and fifty men were captured after a determined fight. All next day the Boers attacked and charged repeatedly, but were driven back, and did not give it up till late at night, when they retired. The Boer force under Louis Botha was 1,500 strong. Major Chapman retired to Fort Prospect next morning, having *no* ammunition left.

September 29.—Itala, Zululand. Reveille at 6. I went over and had a look at Major Chapman's camp. It was a very sad sight. Tents were cut up by our men; a whole company line of horses shot down by expanding bullets; the whole place smelt of blood, and all round were bloodstained bandages and uniforms, besides thousands upon thousands of empty cartridge cases. The Carbineers picked up several of our dead and buried them. About fifteen or twenty Boers (dead) were found in a kraal and buried. Once again I say a splendid and heroic defence! After breakfast, at 9, we had sudden orders to move at once. I hear Louis Botha is moving on Fort Prospect, also that he has captured Melmoth and a convoy of twenty waggons going to that place. We moved off at 10; my company was right flank guard. It was very stiff country, and extremely hard to scout and reconnoitre. You have no idea how beautiful the country is, though, covered with the most lovely green grass, and everywhere there are veldt lilies and blossoms. Every now and again there is a woodlet of black wattle in bloom, with blue gum-trees giving out a delicious aroma, while overhead is the bluest of skies and the glorious South African sun;

and to make the country alive there are the numerous waterfalls, spruits and rivers. *Z*ululand is a wonderful country!

Well, we moved east and occupied the mountains overlooking the Imhlatuzi River, Fort Prospect, and Melmoth. There was a general sniping all round, and the J Battery shelled fifty Boers off a hill to our north. The Boers were in position, about 1,000 strong, on an impregnable position north-north-east of us and between us and our oncoming convoy with supplies. The men have had no food for thirty-six hours, but I have been able, as most have, to buy mealies for the horses from neighbouring *Z*ulu kraals. We camped here at 11. No. 4 Company (Gloucesters) are on outpost duty opposite the Boer position, together with twenty men of mine under Boyd. There was a terrific thunderstorm to-night, and the lightning was appalling and unpleasantly close. I dined with the Major and turned in at 10. All quiet.

September 30.—Five miles east of Itala. Reveille at 3. Moved off at 5 north-north-west to rejoin our convoy, which is in possible danger of being scuppered. My company were right flank guard to column. Most of the way we had a sniping match with the Boers, who held ridges on our right. Farther to the right we could see parties of 100 to 150 moving north-north-west, well out of gun-range. We marched about ten miles, when advanced guard of convoy was sighted at 10 a.m. We halted and camped at Babanango Spruit at 11 a.m., 4,000 yards south-south-west of a high ridge occupied by the enemy, who, although pom-pommed all day, sniped our posts merrily. [On the 7th we heard the news that at the moment we reached Babanango Louis Botha himself was the other side with 2,500 men trekking off! His snipers were a rearguard.]

The convoy came in at 1, with one transport and five days' supplies, which have got to last eight to ten days! The men will be on three-quarter rations, horses on half-rations. Poulteney's column also came in, and

camped four miles south-west of us. It is fortunately a splendid grazing country for horses. MacLean and twenty men came in with the convoy and joined me again. A beautiful hot day. It is a comfort to have our tents again!

October 1.—Babanango Spruit. Reveille at 6. The column remains halted to-day. Allenby's column moved out early to Fort Prospect; General Bruce Hamilton goes to Melmoth. At 10 a reconnoitring party, composed of 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry, went out to reconnoitre the ridge due north of camp—eighty men in all, under Captain Ellis. A few Boers were there, but retired hastily on our advance; one Boer was shot, otherwise there is nothing new.

October 2.—Reveille at 6. Horses turned out grazing; the force remains halted here to-day. There are only quarter rations for the horses and three-quarter rations for the men. A fine hot day. Played a match at cricket—right half-company *v.* left half-company. It was very amusing. It came on cold and misty in the evening.

October 3.—Reveille at 6. Turned out horses grazing. The force moved at 1 p.m. back again to Itala as follows: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 2) and two guns rearguard.

We had an uneventful march of nine or ten miles, and halted and camped on a big spur off Itala. Three companies Scottish Rifles joined our column to-day.

October 4.—Itala. Reveille at 3.30. The force moved into Melmoth for supplies. The 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry march north-north-east towards Vryheid with no transport, except Scotch-carts and Cape-carts, for five days' trek; half rations for the men and only one-tenth rations for the horses for five days! It is miserable to ride hungry horses, and to see them starving and dying under one's very nose when one

can't do anything. We trekked off at 5.30 over mountainous country. I furnished right flank guard at first. Trekked on to five miles the other side of Babanango. Halted here. Then the 14th Mounted Infantry proceeded due north on reconnaissance after the force had halted for two hours. I furnished advanced guard and supports. No. 4 Company was left flank guard and No. 2 Company right flank guard.

Allenby's column is twenty miles on our right flank, north-east of us; a column—I think Poulteney's—is on our left, twenty-five miles off, at Nqutu. We could see Boers all round us in small numbers; some of my flankers exchanged shots. We went on for five miles, then returned to the main body and camped on high ground. Got in at 6 p.m. We must have done twenty-five miles to-day. I lost two horses, worn out.

October 5.—Mooihoek. Reveille at 4. The force moved out at 6.15 towards Umvolosi River. The two flank guards left at 5.45 in order to hold the high ridges on each side of our advance, which was down to and through a huge valley, bounded on both sides by hills from 1,000 to 1,500 feet high.

There was a marvellous sunrise this morning. We camped on the summit of a ridge. Awakening, we found ourselves lying with a bank of white undulating clouds beneath us, which hid all the low ground and valleys, while everywhere black summits of hills were sticking out; it looked like a huge frozen sea with black rocky islands. At 5.30 the sun rose and turned this sea first to a beautiful delicate pink like a girl's blush, then to a magnificent crimson—a truly glorious sight!

Well, we moved at 6.15 1,500 feet down to the valleys below to a most lovely country covered with farms, palms, cactus, and mimosa. It was a terrible road! However, I am glad to say that after a good deal of personal scouting I was able to procure 1,000 lb. of mealies, which I bought from Kaffir kraals. Each man filled his horse's nosebag. We trekked on. At 11 my

company became advanced guard, and took possession of a succession of ridges at the head of the valley and overlooking the Umvolosi River. The country glorious; the day blazing hot—almost tropical heat. It was a bad road for transport. At 1 I heard that our Scotch-cart was smashed about three miles back. I rushed back with one section to recover our rations and belongings, and found the Scotch-cart hopelessly smashed in a drift. I took back everything on the mules, which I used as pack-animals, and loaded up the men, then burnt the cart. It was hard work to load up the mules; it took three hours. We returned to camp across and north of the Umvolosi River. We are so glad at last to have food for the horses! We marched about ten miles to-day, but owing to very stiff country it was equal to twenty-five miles on ordinary ground. It has certainly been a hard day, and bad luck to lose our Scotch-cart. We reached camp at 6.

October 6.—White Umvolosi River, Klipgat. Reveille at 5. The column moved at 7. My company was left flank. A blazing hot day. The kraals and farms are all cleared, so we were unable to obtain mealies. We marched about eight miles, then halted and camped at Goedgeloof (four miles east of Umvolosi River). We came in touch with General Clements' column ten miles north of us. With him is Colonel Poulteney's column. On our right, at Swartzkop, are Allenby and Bruce Hamilton.

October 7.—Goedgeloof, Umvolosi River. Reveille at 5. The column moved at 7. Again a blazing hot day. My company were advanced guard and scouts. I sent Boyd out scouting. We came in touch with Clements' scouts on our left. Marched north-north-east towards Bevenson. Eight miles north-west of us is Mount Intabenkulu, which is held by 200 of Clements' people. Allenby's column is to our right, Kitchener's column twenty miles north of us. The Boers are in great force under Louis Botha, with waggons and guns on a huge ridge sixteen or twenty

miles north-east covered with trees and scrub. We marched to-day about ten or twelve miles, and, curious enough, passed over the same ground where I was last March when on reconnaissance with Colonel Jenner (Alderson's trek), and had a skirmish near Whaleback Hill with 80 or 100 Boers.

I am now buying mealies every day from Zulu kraals for the company horses, so that they get 10 lb. each of mealies a day; not so bad. I pay 20s. for 500 lb. I hope to get the money back from the Government later on. You would laugh to see me haggling over a sack of mealies with the natives and persuading them to part. Life has its humorous side out here even. I was buying mealies the other day, and arranging terms with the women, who do all the selling. All of a sudden there was a great commotion, when the old chap came out in a great rage with a stick and beat all his wives, etc., who bolted to a safe distance and laughed at him. After a great deal of palaver I found out that the row was about an earthenware pot which one of the wives had broken. It was very funny.

I think my horses are better fed than those of any other company. We halted and camped at 2 o'clock on high, commanding ground. It is raining to-night. By the way, I have to find outposts round the whole camp to-night, as it is No. 1 Company's turn. I find one officer and sixty men. Posted them myself.

October 8.—Bevenson. Reveille at 6. A cold, misty, wet morning. Owing to being unable to get orders by helio through the mist, the column remains halted to-day. A very miserable, wet day, and no tents. I spent the day buying mealies from the kraals. No news otherwise.

October 9.—Reveille at 6. Turned the horses out grazing. It rained all night, and is another cold, wet day. The force moved at 10, north-east, towards the Ignomu Forest, where the Boers are (fifteen miles off). We had not gone further than four miles when the whole column was ordered to go back. Dispatches

had come in from Bruce Hamilton; the Boers are doubling back south-west. However, two companies went on north-east to destroy a grist mill, and they came in touch with forty or fifty Boers and had a small skirmish. After destroying the mill they were fired on by the Boers pretty closely; my company, as rearguard, covered their retreat. The column then marched to Geluk, three to four miles east-north-east of Mount Intabenkulu; there was sniping on the right all the way. At the nek through Intabenkulu J Battery and pom-pom shelled some Boers pretty successfully. We camped at 5 p.m. just north of a very pretty and picturesque farm surrounded by mimosa and black wattle in bloom. I got another 800 lb. of mealies to-day, there being no issue of forage or rations. The weather improves, but is doubtful. It is a lovely country.

October 10.—Geluk. Reveille at 5. A stormy, threatening morning; it is blowing a hurricane. The column moved at 7.30, back again through Intabenkulu Nek to Bevenson. The dispositions of the columns are changed again. We marched back to Bevenson, where I am glad to say we rejoined our waggons and also received three days' supplies by convoy. Bruce Hamilton and Allenby are on our left front, trekking on. I believe Louis Botha and his force are occupying an enormous ridge north-east of us. The farms here are surrounded by palms, ferns, mimosa, and mulberry bushes. We camped at 3.30 p.m. It came on very hot and close, with heavy black clouds all round. At 10 received orders for a reconnaissance of all mounted troops. Allenby's column with General Bruce Hamilton are two miles north of us across the spruit.

October 11.—Nooitgedacht. Mounted troops of both columns moved out. All operations are under Bruce Hamilton. The remainder of the troops remain to escort both convoys. Well, we moved off. As regards our column, I with half-company furnished advanced guard. Proceeded west and overtook Gough's force,

who were in action with some 80 to 100 Boers, who held a horseshoe-shaped ridge and impeded his advance. After a good deal of shelling and pom-pomming Gough's Mounted Infantry, under cover of J Battery, reached the top. The Boers retired. Four hours were then spent getting the guns up, which took double teams and fifty men on drag-ropes to get them up the steep ascent of 1,200 to 1,500 feet. Gough's force went on west-north-west, and we halted. It came on to rain, and was very cold. At 2 p.m. we heard that we should not return to the column, but camp out, with no food and no blankets, and it was raining hard. We moved on a few miles and camped at 3 at Uitkomst, alongside a strip of black wattle-trees, on a ridge; Gough, General Spens, and No. 3 Company (Cooke's) 14th Mounted Infantry were camping near Leeuwnek, eight miles west-north-west. Well, everybody was in bad straits. I went to a farm and got a few chickens and potatoes, also plenty of wood. It was still raining hard, with a Scotch mist, and was very cold and cheerless. All caught sheep.

October 12.—Uitkomst. Second anniversary of the outbreak of the war. All bad things come to an end, and at 5 we cooked our breakfast, such as it was, and proceeded off at 7, due north, the horses worn out with cold and exposure. We marched on, up and down mountains; I was rearguard. At 11 we came in touch with 200 or 300 Boers, who retired after quite a stiff fusillade and shelling. It is almost impossible to catch Boers in this country; it is too stiff. We trekked on and on without halting, the whole way being strewn with dead horses. We marched first north, then north-east and east. The camp was sighted at 6 (only Allenby's). We heard Spens was camping the other side of the drift at Welkom Farm. We arrived here, and to everyone's dismay found our column was ten miles off. It was dark, and everybody camped where he could. It was fortunately fine, but a very cold night. All were starving. Allenby, however, sent

us one-fifth rations for men and horses—viz., one biscuit and two pounds of oats—a splendid feast! Luckily, most of us and the men had killed sheep and brought in meat. There was only green wood to burn; we were worse off than we were last night; however, we made the best of it. Everybody is in the same boat, from General Officer Commanding downwards. We got some sort of a fire together with dried mealy stalks, and spent another hungry, sleepless night. Wonderful! Everybody was very cheery and making the best of a bad job!

October 13.—Welkom Farm. Got up at 4, very, very stiff; turned out our hungry horses to graze for an hour. Got breakfast ready—splendid! It is a fine. warm morning. At 6 we marched off to rejoin our convoy. At 9 we sighted it on the top of a ridge. No poor devil of a shipwrecked sailor ever welcomed a sail with more joy than we welcomed our convoy. We halted here at a spruit, and waited for it. The Boers held a long ridge running north-east to south-west, and sniped us all day, as well as troubling the rear-guard of the convoy, which was to the south-east corner of the same ridge. I had a welcome clean up and swim. All put up tents. At 7 we had a gorgeous dinner, and we ate and ate. Afterwards we had a game of bridge, and then we turned in and slept. We are situated twenty miles south-east of Vryheid, with mountains and ridges all round. The country here is too mountainous to catch anybody, and impossible for transport. By the way, Gough's little column had a skirmish near Leeuwnek yesterday with 80 or 100 Boers, and one man of the J Battery was wounded in the foot. Perhaps, with luck, next October ought to see the finish of the war.

October 14.—Welkom. Allenby's column, under Bruce Hamilton, went into Vryheid at 4 this morning. Our column remains halted here to-day. The Boers are still round; they snipe our outposts all day. It is pretty exciting just now. This morning eight of the

13th, under a corporal, went out on vedette south-south-east of camp to take up a position on a ridge; thirty Boers waited for them, shot two, and took two prisoners. A company of the 13th Mounted Infantry had to turn out to clear them off. Their Commandant, Anderson, sent us in a message by the returned prisoners that they would go on for ever. Hurrah! So will we. I was orderly officer to-day, and took out a wood party to a farm south of camp, taking care to have a good covering party out. All was clear, however.

October 15.—Reveille at 6. The column remains halted here to-day. It is a lovely, hot day. Sniping is proceeding all round the camp. This morning a vedette north-west of camp was driven in. A section of Gough's had to go out to reinstate them. No. 1 Company is on outpost to-night—my turn. I took forty men out, and was in charge of south to west portion. A beautiful moonlight night; all clear. Gough's Mounted Infantry go out at midnight in an easterly direction to hold ridges for the column to pass through to-morrow.

October 16.—Reveille at 3.30. The column moved to Vryheid at 5.30 a.m. Our company was rearguard. You will remember that on our left is a succession of ridges. It was a hot, fine day. The column was sniped all the way, and we, as rearguard, had a succession of slight skirmishes the whole way with twenty or thirty Boers, who persistently followed us. Brass worked the rearguard very well; there were no casualties. The column had to cross six to eight drifts, consequently we made very slow progress. The marches were about eleven or twelve miles, and we did not get to camp till 5.30 p.m. Gough's Mounted Infantry had a skirmish on the left flank, and had one man wounded; they, however, killed one Boer outright, wounded another, and destroyed four waggons, two Cape-carts, and collared two tents; this was early this morning. Nott's Company did this. He also got three Mausers

and three bandoliers. On arrival in camp, orders were helioed out to us that we were to remain here for the present and entrench ourselves; one regiment Mounted Infantry to go to Goedgebock and entrench themselves.

Nott fired at what he thought was a man in white trousers; it turned out to be a woman in unmentionables; the lady bolted. On going into the tent she had so hastily evacuated a side-saddle was found, a rifle, and a bandolier with 'Maggie Meyer' on it!

October 17.—Rietvlei. The column remains halted to-day. The 13th Mounted Infantry go to Goedgebock for two days to entrench themselves at 7. Usual camp duties.

October 18.—Reveille at 6. One hundred and forty men are ordered to proceed to Newcastle at 8, to draw 280 remounts for 5th Corps; four officers detailed to go; Cooke in charge, Hilton, Stephenson, and myself. We proceeded at 8 a.m. Sykes of the gunners with twenty-four men, and forty men of Gough's Mounted Infantry joined us. Sykes was in command of the whole party. It was a cold, wet, rainy day. We trekked with all cast horses and reached Vryheid at 4 o'clock, camping here after having trekked ten miles. I am mess president, so I bought stores at Vryheid.

October 19.—Vryheid. Reveille at 5. Moved off at 8 towards Dundee. A cold wet day. We passed Scheepers' Nek, close to where Gough's had their reverse. A very stiff bit of country. We got into camp at 6 at Rooikoppjes, Blood River.

October 20.—Rooikoppjes, Blood River. Reveille at 5.30. We moved off at 7.30 to De Jager's Drift; after an uneventful trek of twelve miles reached here at 4.30. At midday halt passed outgoing convoy for Spens. We halted and camped at De Jager's Drift at 4.30.

October 21.—De Jager's Drift, Buffalo River. Reveille at 5. Moved off at 7 to Dundee, and, after an

uneventful trek reached here at 12.30, and camped near the railway-station.

October 22.—Dundee. Entrained for Newcastle and arrived here this evening.

14th Mounted Infantry, 5th Corps.

October 24.—The 5th corps is done away with, and Colonel Jenner and Major Vernon will probably get some other billet. All corps are now obsolete.

I drew seventy horses to-day; am here away from the column, which is expected in three days, drawing horses. The weather is showery.

October 31.—I have been in Newcastle till to-day. We move day after to-morrow, and probably go to Harrismith, Vrede, and Orange River Colony.

The column came in and joined us the day before yesterday. The battalion got 120 remounts, all fairly useful horses. Since I left the column nothing happened except a successful night reconnaissance by Major Pratt, when eight Boers were caught. The weather has been very hot, with one or two stormy days. Gough's Mounted Infantry have rejoined the column.

November 1.—Newcastle. Had orders to move to-morrow; otherwise usual camp duties.

November 2.—Reveille at 4. Trekked off at 6 north-west, towards Botha's Pass. Very glad to be on the veldt again! Order of march: One company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry, rearguard. Main body: Three companies Black Watch (just joined us); four guns J battery R.H.A.; two guns 74th battery R.F.A.; one pom-pom, F section; one 9-pounder quick-firing gun.

We take fourteen days' supplies (seventy-five ox-waggons), which went ahead yesterday with one company of the Black Watch as escort.

A fine hot day. We marched through the Drakensberg to two miles south of Botha's Pass (eleven miles), where we picked up the ox-convoy and camped. It was a very difficult road; one of our Cape-carts upset, but luckily nothing was broken. Major Bridgeford rejoined us to-night, and Brass comes back to the company.

I heard to-day that Benson's column had a severe knock from Louis Botha. Benson, eleven officers, and 100 men killed and wounded. Not over-pleasant news!

November 3.—Two miles south of Botha's Pass. Reveille at 5. Breakfast at 6. The column moved at 7 a.m., as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry, advanced guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) rearguard.

A windy, showery day. We were left flank guard. The ox-convoy started at 5 a.m. to climb Botha's Pass (600 feet), using double teams of oxen. There was a long halt at the top. We took up a position 1,500 yards to the left-front of column. Here a somewhat singular affair happened. We noticed eleven or twelve mounted men riding about on a ridge two miles west-north-west of us, and naturally took them for Boers. One of the guides (intelligence) rode up to us and told us these men were his Kaffir scouts (our Kaffir scouts are armed, and in the distance look very like Boers). He then rode out towards them. Half an hour afterwards we saw twelve men come galloping in, dismount, and fire towards our left, 1,000 yards from us, on a slight undulation to left-front. Two scouts came right in, but not to us. It looked suspicious, so we brought a section up and laid low. What we thought were Kaffir scouts rode quietly away afterwards, supposedly to have a plug at some Boers unseen by us. Meanwhile we helioed in, asking how many scouts were out. To our astonishment we

heard that all our scouts were in, so nine of the twelve were pucker Boers! And we let them go! Mind you, they all looked black, probably unwashed for months. An hour later our friend the guide came in minus his horse, which had been shot, also minus bandoliers, rifle, boots and spurs. It served him jolly well right for misleading us, and for an intelligence chap not to know where his scouts were was very disgusting, as we could certainly have picked off some, having thirty good shots lying low. However, next time! Sixty Boers are reported three miles to our left, or west-north-west of us.

Camped close to here, three miles north of Botha's Pass.

Orders to march at 1 a.m. All mounted troops to go. Roused at 11 p.m.

November 4.—Mounted column, as under, marched as follows: No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry in advance, three companies 14th Mounted Infantry, three companies 13th Mounted Infantry, three companies Gough's Mounted Infantry; two guns R.H.A., pom-pom. Objective: To attempt to round up 60 to 100 Boers known to be on our left, and to reconnoitre Drakensberg and Krangkop, south-south-west of us and north-east of Newcastle. Fourteenth Mounted Infantry on the left; 13th Mounted Infantry centre; Gough's Mounted Infantry on the right.

A fine night, but misty in the hollows, with a waning moon. We marched as far as the ridges where the Boers were yesterday, all three battalions split up as above, the guns going in the centre (this at 3.45 a.m.). It was very misty; we were unable to see 50 yards; we, however, climbed up some 500 feet and left our horses. No. 1 Company then proceeded forward on foot to a nek where the Boers would probably be driven through by Gough's Mounted Infantry. The whole company was used in picketing the ridge. At 4.15 it got light, but there was still a thick mist. We waited till 7.15, when the mist raised and the sun came

through. It was a wonderful contrast, from a cold, wet mist to a glorious view of brilliant green veldt and hills lit up by the sun. There were no Boers in sight.

The horses came up at 8.45, as well as the remainder of the 14th. All mounted and swung round to our left, or due south, the 13th on our right-front and Gough's on their right front. We pushed on as far as Krangkop, where we halted; there were only very distant bodies of Boers visible. A short halt for breakfast, then at 11.30 all returned to the main column camped at Goedgebock, eight miles north-west of Krangkop. We reached camp at 2. There was a heavy thunderstorm, and everybody got a drenching. Welcome dinner at 7.

November 5.—Goedgebock. Reveille at 4. Marched off at 6 north-west as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company Black Watch and pom-pom, two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 1 and 4) rearguard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard.

A showery day and an uneventful march of six miles to Muller's Drift, except for persistent sniping of the rearguard, ourselves and No. 4 Company. We reached camp at 11.

November 6.—Muller's Drift. Reveille at 3 a.m. The column marched at 5 a.m. north-west in the direction of Vrede, viâ Gemsbokberg. Gough's Mounted Infantry find guards to column.

An independent force (Lieutenant-Colonel Jenner) also marched at 5 west-north-west on the left flank, taking mule-waggons and three days' supplies, as well as column of 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry, two guns R.H.A. (J Battery) and pom-pom.

The country we go through is very hilly and broken, particularly on the left. About twenty miles west of us are the Witte Kopjes, remarkable for their extraordinary and grotesque shapes.

We marched on until stopped by about 200 Boers holding a nek, with steep rugged hills on either side, through which we had to pass.

Our order of march was: Three companies 13th Mounted Infantry on the left, under Major Pratt; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 2) in advance; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 3) right flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) rearguard.

It was a fine hot day. J Battery shelled the nek and hills. Pratt gained his position first on the left, and was able to enfilade the Boer position, which was very strong. Gradually Nos. 2 and 4 gained the ridges on the right, and the Boers cleared off. Whilst this was going on we were acting as rearguard, followed up by twenty or thirty Boers, and we had rather an interesting series of skirmishes. The column passed through the nek; the country on the other side is very broken. The Boers kept on tenaciously all round, and there was quite a general engagement. Spens' column was also fighting on the right.

At 2 the column camped about five miles beyond, or north-west of the nek. We (rearguard) had quite a tight little action, as the Boers closed round on us and kept close to us. The men did awfully well to-day, and we gave the Boers more than they bargained for. We shot several horses, and certainly cleared two saddles of Boers. Luckily we had no casualties except two horses shot.

Camped at 3. No. 4 Company (Gloucesters) had three men taken prisoners, and the 13th had one man wounded. We marched ten or twelve miles.

November 7.—Goedendeg, one mile west of Commando Spruit. Reveille at 3.30. We marched at 5.30 as follows: 13th Mounted Infantry (with our waggons); two guns J Battery; 14th Mounted Infantry, working on the left under Major Bridgeford, D.S.O.

Spens' and main column are ten miles on our right, at Gemsbokberg (a high kopje), with pom-pom. We

started in fine weather. Our waggons went by the road viâ Hope Royal, Beginsel, Cork, to Wagen Pad, where they halted. We (14th) reconnoitred high ground on the left through Tipperary, Haartebeeste-vlakten to Zuurpoort. The Boers occupied ridges five miles west of us, to our left. No. 4 Company, on the left, came in touch, and had a skirmish, one man of ours being shot through the head (not dangerous).

November 8.—Wagen Pad. Reveille at 6. Marched due west to rejoin main column at 9. Thirteenth Mounted Infantry, under Major Pratt, worked independently on the left flank; 14th Mounted Infantry were with the waggons. Nos. 1 and 2 Companies were rearguard. It was an uneventful march of eight miles, except for the rearguard being chivied by the usual twenty or thirty Boers. Boyd was assistant Provost-Marshal to our little column, and did very well. We got 300 oxen and 1,000 sheep, and killed or wounded four Boers. Kaffirs, of course, we bring in.

Camped near Bothaberg (south-east of it). De Lisle's column is at Vrede. From him we got the corroboration of the rumour that Benson's column was attacked and badly defeated by 1,500 Boers under Louis Botha near Ermelo. Eleven officers killed and wounded, 300 men killed and wounded, two guns captured, Benson killed. Shocking bad news! It may prolong the war almost indefinitely. De Lisle marched 130 miles in four days to support him. Botha marched sixty miles in twenty-four hours after Benson, followed him, attacked him just as he was camping, scuppered the whole rearguard, and then played general havoc all round. There were 100 Boer casualties.

To talk of the war being near the close seems absurd!

To our right, or east, are nine columns—De Lisle, Rimington, Wilson, Briggs, and others.

Although the days are hot and fine, every afternoon between 2 and 6 we get heavy thunderstorms with regular downpours. The veldt is beautifully green and covered with flowers.

November 9.—Paardeplaats, near Bothaberg. Reveille at 4. At 4.30 I took vedettes out and posted them. We only saw distant Boers. Gough's Mounted Infantry and 13th Mounted Infantry left camp at 4.30 a.m., the former on the left and the latter on the right.

The column left at 6 a.m. due west as follows: Two guns 74th Battery and No. 4 Company 14th Mounted Infantry advanced guard; No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; No. 2 Company 14th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; No. 3 Company 14th Mounted Infantry and pom-pom rearguard.

It was a fine day. We proceeded west of Bothaberg. We were wide on the left flank. The advanced guard came in touch with twenty or thirty Boers, who retired after being shelled. Then the column proceeded west-south-west through a nek; the rearguard had orders to remain behind to cover the sheep being brought in. I with thirty men held the ridges on the left of the nek. Remained here; thirty to fifty Boers worried the rearguard, who had one company Black Watch with them. Bailey pom-pommed the Boers well, and I think bowled over some. After waiting half an hour, I noticed some Boers closing round my left; I was on one of those awkward hills with a big flat top and no cover. I sent my horses down to the bottom of the hill, and rode forward to see what our friends were going to do. I had gone about 300 yards, when two Boers got up at 500 yards and deliberately fired bang at me; luckily both shots just missed me, and I retired very promptly on to my men, got them in the best position, and started volleys at a clump of ten Boers at 1,800 yards. The rearguard then went through the nek, and I, having completed my job of holding the nek, got on my horse and cleared off to rejoin Brass, who was five miles on the left flank. I rejoined Brass, and then we all went into camp at Hartebeestefontein. The column had done ten miles.

The column got into communication with Rimington

at Tafelkop, near Frankfort. Lowe's column on our left, De Lisle's column on our right; other columns are all in touch. No special news; a terrific and colossal thunderstorm to-night, ground swamped.

November 10.—Hartebeestelaager. To-day is the saddest day I have spent out here, one of the saddest in my life.

A mounted column under Colonel Jenner went out at 4 a.m., composed of 200 men 13th Mounted Infantry, 200 men 14th Mounted Infantry, and one pom-pom. Objective, in conjunction with Gough's Mounted Infantry on our left and Lowe's column on our right, to round up 400 Boers under De Kok, De Wet, and Steyn, who were stuck at the Wilge River with oxen and waggons. We started off: No. 4 Company advanced guard; No. 1 Company right flank guard; 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; 13th Mounted Infantry rear-guard. It was a beautifully fine morning after the rain. We marched through flat, open country due west towards Wilge River. I was in charge of twenty-five men on extreme right. On getting near the river I spotted 300 or 400 oxen two miles on. I galloped over and sent them in. Then I noticed 2,000 or 3,000 more oxen across the river, so I galloped back to Brass and told him. We then came along with the whole company, and stopped at kopjes overlooking the river. Then we helioed our find to Colonel Jenner, four miles back. We received reply to proceed no further. I then went down with a man to find a drift, if possible. Meanwhile some ten to twenty Boers were firing on us and the company, and our men replied. I went down. The oxen (1,100 or 1,200) came down of their own accord to water, so I tried to cross, in order to herd them across. There was a terrific current, and I lost my depth, finding it a tight job to get out, as the stream was going at quite four miles an hour and had carried me down twenty yards before I got to the bank again. However, I got out, and noticing some men at river bank, thought they were going to cross, so got on

my pony and galloped over to stop them, the crossing being really impossible. When I got up to them they told me that poor Brass had tried to cross, and had almost reached the other bank; but, finding himself unable to get ashore, returned, and went under in mid-stream. Two men had tried to get him out, although the whole time the Boers were firing on us from the hills and the other side of the river. I galloped downstream to see if his body was washed ashore, but could see no traces of it anywhere. Then, as explicit orders came by helio to retire, I did so. MacLean, the doctor, and two men rode back with flags of truce to try and recover his body, but the attempt proved futile. The Boers really behaved awfully well. They met the party, threw down their arms, and gave every assistance; it was very chivalrous of them. We all then returned to camp (some eight miles), my company furnishing left flank guard, all very downhearted and sad. Brass, my Captain, was one of the best friends I ever had out here. I really loved him, he was so absolutely unselfish, so generous. One of the most popular men in the column, he was, as a soldier, an ideal company officer, beloved and respected by the men, splendid in the field, and awfully courageous. He was, too, about the keenest sportsman I have ever met. It is a great blow to me. I have lost a real friend, and that means much.

We marched from Hartebeestelaager to four miles south of Bomboes Spruit Drift, Wilge River. Poor Brass met his death 2,000 yards south of Bomboes Spruit. The Boers are on the other side.

We got to-day one Boer killed (by us, shot through the head) and 500 head of cattle. The river is unfordable anywhere, except at the drifts, owing to the recent storms and heavy rains. We hope this time to catch De Wet, Steyn and Co.

Poor Brass died at 10.40 a.m. on November 10, in the Wilge River, one and a half miles south of Bomboes Spruit Drift; he was such a strong swimmer that

I fancy he must have died either of failure of the heart's action or exhaustion, as, according to the onlookers, he went under, came up once, then finally sank without a struggle. There are only three of us now—Boyd, MacLean, and myself. Later in the day we went over poor Brass's kit and got everything together, ready to send it all home to his wife in England.

Hill (of J Battery) very kindly offered to get his men to make a cross, which we gratefully accepted.

November 11.—Rooikraals. Reveille at 5. The column moved west towards Wilge River at 7 a.m. as follows: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one company 13th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 4) rearguard.

We marched to Wilge River, Lowe's column on our left, De Lisle's on our right. A long halt at Wilge River gave me the opportunity of taking the whole company over with the Padre to the identical spot where Brass was drowned.

On a stony kop we placed a cross with the inscription:

'CAPTAIN E. H. BRASS,
2nd East Yorks Regiment, 14th Mounted Infantry.
Drowned on active service in this river,
November 10, 1901.'

A funeral service was then held, the men with arms reversed forming three sides of a square. The Major came over to be present. On a brilliant day, the wonderful green veldt studded with ridges and kopjes, the Wilge River just beneath us, opposite a few sniping Boers, all around us our own troops, amidst the booming of distant guns and crack of rifles, we paid our last respect to one of the bravest soldiers, one of the kindest men we have ever seen! Only a short service, a few impressive words to us all

from the Padre, a final 'Present arms!' and we all marched back to our work.

The 14th Mounted Infantry then had orders to cross the Wilge River, together with De Lisle's men, for a reconnaissance.

I must tell you that the river has actually fallen 5 feet since yesterday, and even to-day it is almost unfordable at the drift for waggons—3 feet 6 inches deep, the current three and a half miles an hour. The water is dropping 3 inches an hour. This will give you some sort of an idea how rivers rise and fall here. The width of the stream is 90 feet. Well, we crossed. I was leading the company, and together with De Lisle on the right, and Nos. 2 and 3 Companies on the left, we made a rush for the ridges on the other side of Wilge River.

The Boers hastily decamped, only offering a slight resistance.

We held the hill for three hours; then all returned to camp, close to the west bank of river. There were no casualties; we took two prisoners. Columns were all round.

Vassall, on rearguard, had a skirmish with thirty to fifty Boers, and killed two.

November 12.—Strypoort, Wilge River. Reveille at 3. Column moved due west as follows: One company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) and pom-pom advanced guard; one section 13th Mounted Infantry right flank guard; one section Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns 74th Battalion rearguard. Gough's Mounted Infantry form a flying column on the right flank, with two guns J Battery, under Major Gough; 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry, with two guns J Battery, under Lieutenant-Colonel Jenner, form a flying column on the left flank. De Lisle on the right; Lowe on the left.

My company formed advanced guard. Now that poor Brass has gone I take command of the company again.

All columns converge upon Paardenhoek. The column marched about eight miles, and halted and camped near Paardenhoek. Both flying columns came in at about 2 p.m., having met with small success, and only bringing a few cattle. The Boers all retreated in a south-west direction, closely pressed by Elliot, Broadwood, Lowe, and Dartnell's columns. Our column has so far only got eight prisoners, three wounded, 1,500 cattle, and 3,000 sheep.

I found twenty men for outpost to-night. A fine, hot day.

November 13.—Paardenhoek. Reveille at 4. Column moved at 6 a.m. as follows, due east towards Standerton, to refill: One company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry left flank guard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 2 and 3) right flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 1) and two guns 74th Battery rearguard. I was in charge of rearguard.

An uneventful march back to the Wilge River. The advanced guard had a slight engagement with thirty or fifty Boers on recrossing the Wilge River. We stopped on the west side of the river to allow the waggons to cross, also as an escort to Captain Whitehead, our signalling officer, who was in direct communication with Harrismith (sixty-five miles off). This is remarkable, and more possible in this country than elsewhere. We also got into communication with Elliot, viâ Harrismith. We crossed Wilge River and passed north-west side of Leeuwkop to camp, having marched fourteen or fifteen miles. It was a clear, hot day. The left flank guard had a slight brush with a party of Boers. Encamped at 3.

November 14.—Nooitgedacht. Reveille at 4. Column marched at 6 a.m. as follows: One company Mounted Infantry and pom-pom advanced guard; 13th Mounted Infantry (300 men) and two guns J Battery under Major Pratt, column on left flank; one company Gough's

Mounted Infantry right flank guard; half-company Gough's Mounted Infantry, left flank guard; one company Gough's Mounted Infantry and two guns 74th Battery rearguard. The column moved eastwards towards Standerton, and passed south of Tafelkop by Frankfort. My company was sent back to support rearguard (Nott's company, King's Royal Rifles), who were being pressed by sixty or eighty Boers. General fighting all round the column; Boers very active about here. Some of Gough's Mounted Infantry on the right flank were wounded (one since died). Rolling veldt, brilliant day. Column marched fifteen miles, and halted and camped at 3. Major Pratt took several farms on the left flank, and brought in some cattle.

November 15.—Bomje Alleen. Reveille at 4. The column moved at 6 a.m. as follows: One company 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 3 and 4) left flank guard; half-company 13th Mounted Infantry rear flank guard; two companies 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 1 and 2) and two guns 74th Battery rearguard.

Major Gough and his Mounted Infantry started at 4.30 a.m. to work independently on the right flank. The column started, and there was a general skirmishing all round. Four men of No. 2 Company were either wounded, killed, or captured whilst doing rearguard scouts. My company was in support of the rearguard; Major Bridgeford commanded. Some fifty to sixty Boers followed us persistently. No. 4 Company had three men captured on our left flank whilst destroying a waggon. Some Boers actually galloped at right flank and advanced guard. The column marched amidst general skirmishing about fourteen miles east-north-east, and halted and camped south-west side of Vaal River at 3.30 a.m. The enemy is getting more daring every day; it is necessary to keep our eyes pretty wide open.

November 16.—Mooibank. The column marched at 6.15 to Standerton, viâ the south of Joubert's Kop. A

strong left flanking column moved under Lieutenant-Colonel Jenner as follows: 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry, pom-pom, two guns J Battery, viâ Roberts' Drift and Joubert's Kop. The left flank guard to this column had a brush with fifteen to twenty Boers, crossed Roberts' Drift, Vaal River, at 3 p.m., and camped near Joubert's Kop at 5.

November 17.—Joubert's Kop. Reveille at 6. Moved off at 8 to Standerton, and rejoined the main body there at 3. An uneventful march. MacLean went off to Durban to send away poor Brass's kit, otherwise there is no news. We camped east side of the town.

November 18 *and* 19.—Standerton. Usual camp duties. We get thirty-six more men from the East Yorks, probably to-morrow, also fifty remounts. Had all the columns marched the last fifty miles at night and without their waggons, we should probably—in fact, we should have been sure to—have secured the greater part of the Boers under De Wet and Steyn. As it is, each column got from five to ten Boers apiece, as well as cattle and a few waggons. The trek has been chiefly remarkable for the offensive tactics of the Boers in small detached parties.

November 22.—General Spens' column remains halted here. However, 400 mounted men from the 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry proceed along the Ermelo road to form a defensive screen to a force of infantry and Engineers building blockhouses from Standerton to Ermelo. Two guns 74th Battery and two companies Black Watch accompany this force, the whole being under Major Bridgeford, D.S.O. Besides this, three companies Gough's Mounted Infantry escort a convoy to Bethel.

Our force started at 6 a.m., and proceeded through Leeuwspruit to Nickersvlei, eleven miles on the Ermelo road, where we encamped beside the Leicesters and Engineers, who are building the blockhouses and have completed same up to this point. We reached here at 2 p.m. On our left is Campbell's column, and in

front is Rawlinson's column, both forming part of another big drive on Louis Botha, who is at Ermelo with 1,200 men, and has besides 800 more men round about Blaauwkop, Vaal River. Both of these places are old friends of ours. The system of building blockhouses is very sound, and as I understand the whole country is to be done, the war is bound to come to a termination, but it looks as if it would take another year. The blockhouses are bullet-proof, circular, and built at the most only 800 yards apart. Connecting each blockhouse is a thick barbed-wire fence with about twenty-four threads, which makes it impossible for anybody to get through. Each blockhouse contains twelve men and a non-commissioned officer, and at important places, such as roads, drifts, etc., there is a larger party—say fifty men and an officer. They build these blockhouses, under normal conditions, at the rate of three miles per day. Each company furnished fifty men, and I am here with fifty men of my company. Boyd and the remainder I have left at Standerton.

November 23.—Nickersvlei. Remained here whilst the blockhouses are being continued. I furnish vedettes for camp; 13th Mounted Infantry furnish 100 men as a covering force. A fine, hot day. I rode round vedettes, otherwise usual camp duties and nothing exciting.

November 24.—Reveille at 5.30. The whole column moved on five miles to Uitkyk, as blockhouses are being built there. We reached and camped here at 10.30.

November 26.—Uitkyk. Reveille at 6; stables. Firing to east or front of camp. All mounted troops turned out. My lot were out first, and I went off. I saw twenty or thirty Boers on my right front. I met our Major, who told me to push on carefully up to the end of the ridge (two to three miles). I went on, but was stopped by determined firing on the part of fifty or sixty Boers lining a gentle ridge to our front. I waited for the guns to come up. They arrived. Now or never! We mounted our horses, scattered out, and made a

dash for the ridge the Boers were holding, 2,000 yards off. They stuck there and fired at us till we got within 1,000 yards of them. The 74th Battery shelled with good effect. On we went to dead ground, handed our horses over, and ran 100 yards to where the Boers were. We saw thirty to fifty of them galloping off at 800 yards. My turn now! We potted them. The guns then came up, as well as fifty of No. 2 Company, also our Major and Cooke. The Boers got a bad time of it, and got peppered till they were out of range. The 74th Battery dropped one man and one horse; our casualties were nil. Great luck this! The Boers retired towards Blaauwkop, seventeen miles south-east of us.

All returned to camp at 11; usual duties. My men did capital work to-day. Owing to the blockhouses the road is open and safe all the way to Standerton. I am sending in for supplies to-morrow. Expect some fighting with our old friend Louis Botha.

November 28.—We expect an attack every day from Louis Botha, who, with 1,500 men and four guns, is at Ermelo; he also has 800 men in the neighbourhood of Blaauwkop, and 180 men four miles east of us. Consequently the whole of the 14th went out this morning under Cooke as a covering force for the blockhouses. The Boers, however, were rather scarce, having evidently moved off to annoy somebody else. With the exception of my company, whose turn it was to furnish covering party, all battalions turned back to camp. I was on the same ridge where we were the day before yesterday. A blazing hot day; we saw a few Boers knocking about. We remained out all day, then went into camp at 5.30. The remainder of Spens' column came out and camped three miles west of us at Nickersvlei. At 10.30 we heard a vigorous gunning about twenty or thirty miles south of us, or from the right. Either Boers attacking a column, or trying to get through the line at Platrand or Paardekop.

November 29.—Uitkyk. Reveille at 6. The column

moved at 8 and joined Spens' column, which had marched over. We crossed Blesbok Spruit against a slight resistance from ten or twenty Boers, and halted and camped two miles beyond. Captain Fielding (Coldstream Guards) comes to us; singularly enough, he is first cousin to my old Commanding Officer, Lord Denbigh.

A threatening evening. The 5th Corps is done away with, and Colonel Jenner is officer commanding mounted troops to Spens' column. I am sorry to say we have no remounts, consequently we are rather weak as regards mounted men.

November 30.—Protest, Blesbok Spruit. Reveille at 4.15. Owing to the early morning mists the column did not march till 8, and then as follows: Gough's Mounted Infantry and pom-pom, right flank to Blaauwkop; two companies 13th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A. advanced guard; 14th Mounted Infantry (Nos. 1, 2, and 4) left flank guard; one company 14th Mounted Infantry (No. 3) right flank guard; two companies 13th Mounted Infantry rearguard.

Marched towards Blaauwkop, Rawlinson's column on our left rear. Our advanced guard came into touch several times with parties of Boers. We on the left flank came in contact with about 100 or 150 Boers. No. 4 Company, who furnished left flank advanced guard, had one horse killed and one man shot through the leg. No. 1 Company then proceeded to the left of left flank guard. Rawlinson was on our left rear, while quantities of Boers were on our left front. Botha close by. We camped at 12.30. I went over to the farm this afternoon and shot thirty pigeons. It has been a cloudy, dull day.

December 1.—Vleyplaats. Reveille at 4. The column moved at 7, Gough's Mounted Infantry furnishing all guards. Thirteenth and 14th Mounted Infantry and two guns R.H.A., with Colonel Jenner in command, formed a strong covering column on the right flank. We marched off. No. 1 Company was in advance,

Boyd scouting, I in support. We worked due east. The orders are that no farms are to be burnt to-day —probably to be kept for future blockhouses. We proceeded about four miles to Amajuba, a long ridge six miles to our left.

On nearing a nek, Boyd went forward, and I closed up in support. Hardly had he reached the top, before he came in for a heavy fire about 700 yards from a rocky ridge to his left. I immediately galloped with one section to this place, 2,000 yards off. My men were well extended. I saw ten or twelve Boers firing at us for all they were worth; I galloped on, dismounted under rocks, left horses, and charged up. Only ten men now! We had hardly got 20 yards before we all saw twenty to thirty Boers rise as one man only 100 yards off, and fire. We all dropped like stones, and only just in time, as a regular volley blazed over our heads. I sent back for more men and lay tight, only getting up every now and again to get a shot in. Every time we got up bullets whizzed past like steam. Corporal Dean, one of my best men, was hit in the arm, and had two other bullets through his clothes. The men did splendidly, and kept the Boers back with a steady fire. It was pretty hot! After waiting five or ten minutes, Warren came up with a company of the 13th. Then we went on, and found the Boers legging it, and quite forty or fifty in number. We then let them have it, and dropped two. Here we stayed.

Boyd and his men and Fielding all did splendid work, and held their ground, although under a heavy flanking fire from the rocky ridge I was on. Four horses were killed—one had five bullets through him—and Fielding had his horse shot. Boyd's men stood firm, and, although widely extended, held their ground.

The guns now came up. Four miles east or in front of us were three separate commandos trekking off, respectively 50 to 70, 300 to 400, 100 to 150, or about 1,000 in all—the largest number of Boers I have seen for many months.

We halted here for orders from the General, whose advanced guard of Gough's Mounted Infantry was already on Amajuba. We received orders to trek on and cross Kaffir Spruit. All the Boers meanwhile were working round our right, evidently making for Uitspan, and crossing the Vaal River. Rawlinson's column camped last night at Klip Kraal, but did not appear in to-day's operations. We trekked on due north-north-east towards Ermelo, parallel to the main column. The Boers kept a respectful distance, and did not worry us any more. We crossed Kaffir Spruit again, and camped at 3 p.m. at Drinkwater.

December 2.—Drinkwater, Kaffir Spruit. Reveille at 6. The column was to have remained halted, but owing to fresh orders from General Bruce Hamilton, who is with Rawlinson's column, we trekked due east at 8. Goûgh's Mounted Infantry, with two guns J Battery formed left front and advanced guard; 13th Mounted Infantry were right advanced guard; No. 1 Company 14th Mounted Infantry right flank guard to column; No. 2 Company 14th Mounted Infantry left flank guard; Nos. 3 and 4 Companies 14th Mounted Infantry rearguard to column.

We marched due east-north-east to Drinkwater, seeing only distant bodies of Boers. Gough's, in advance, had a sharp skirmish with 80 or 100 Boers on high ridges in Transvaalia; pursued them afterwards, and chivied them a good deal. Otherwise it was an uneventful march. We halted and camped at 3 o'clock, after having marched twelve miles. A night attack was expected from Louis Botha, and everybody was on the alert. Major Bridgeford dined with us. He is an excellent officer, and a great friend of mine.

December 3.—Drinkwater. Reveille at 3. The column moved at 5 due north towards Ermelo: 14th Mounted Infantry in advance (No. 2 Company advanced guard); Gough's and 13th Mounted Infantry left, right, and rearguards.

No enemy to be seen. Rawlinson's and Simpson's

columns were fairly close in on our left and left front respectively. A fine, hot day. An uneventful march of twelve miles. We camped on high ground south-east of Ermelo. Rawlinson camped north-west and Simpson south-west of Ermelo. This was at 10 o'clock. With the exception of the church, Ermelo was absolutely burnt, blown up, and destroyed.

Orders are out for a strong reconnaissance to-night, under Bruce Hamilton. A stormy, wet evening. We started at 6.15 p.m. at dusk as follows: 1,500 mounted men under Colonel Rawlinson, and two guns and pom-pom, 700 mounted men, two guns J Battery and pom-pom, under Colonel Jenner, the whole under General Bruce Hamilton. No transport at all, except ambulances and ammunition carts. One day's supplies for horses and two for men. We passed Simpson's camp, and off we jogged. It was very dark. We moved along the Ermelo-Standerton road for five miles to Dejoedenhoop; the ammunition carts were sent back, as the pace was too fast for them. No. 2 Company 14th Mounted Infantry went back as escort. Major Bridgeford stayed behind, and Fielding commanded the battalion, whilst I was in charge of the company which furnished rearguard to the whole column.

December 4.—On we marched through Utrecht and Vereeniging. The weather had cleared, and we now had a moon. On we jogged at five or six miles an hour on somebody's track. Just as the first light of dawn appeared we split up in three columns and shoved on. We were now in Brakfontein. As it just began to get light we trotted. A cheer, a prolonged yell from the right, a huge sally in front, a general gallop forward of 2,000 mounted men, a bark from Baillie's pom-pom, two volleys from the right, and then a rush of all and we were in a laager. All Gough's Mounted Infantry scoured away to the left, the 14th in the centre, then the 13th, and then all Rawlinson's people miles away to the right. A gorgeous spectacle in the rising sun, and a magnificent handling of troops by Bruce Hamilton.

The 14th got in the first laager and captured 15 waggons, 35 armed burghers, women, children, and unarmed burghers, 500 oxen and sheep, 30 Cape-carts, 3 bags of dynamite, and a telegraph tapper. The 13th got the next laager: 12 waggons; 25 armed Boers, women, and children, 400 oxen, sheep, etc. I remained in the laager and burnt Cape-carts, waggons, food-stuffs, etc., being rearguard.

Rawlinson ran thirty or forty Boers to ground on the veldt, who had got off on ponies without their saddles. Gough's and 13th and 14th Mounted Infantry remained at Brakfontein and guarded the capture. Rawlinson went on. It was a blazing hot day. Everybody had a welcome breakfast, and a bit of sleep. At 11 we saddled up, and all marched south-west to Tweefontein, having many halts, owing to the slow progress of the sheep. We reached camp at 2 and settled down. Rawlinson's force camped close by. Our capture was a good one, and 103 Boers were caught, all pukka-fighting ones; in fact, the whole of Klein's commando, the one which always hung about Standerton, chivied everybody, and probably killed poor little Robins. They were the men, too, who gave me such a hot time the other day. This will be a bit of a blow to Louis Botha. I must tell you that Bruce Hamilton has for his guide Wool-Sampson, a splendid officer—the famous one of the Jameson Raid—who did his imprisonment and who refused the C.B. this war, as he wished to serve the late Queen for no reward. He is very wealthy, and has been all his life an enemy to the Boers. He also was guide, philosopher, and friend to the ill-fated Benson, who did so well. Well, we had a very welcome dinner in the open, and turned in at 8.30. The men all did very well with flour and sheep captures from the burghers.

December 5.—Tweefontein. Reveille at 4. We moved towards the line of blockhouses at 6, taking all our captures with us. Rawlinson went back to Ermelo. Simpson's column was just ahead of us with all the

column's empty waggons, taking them to Standerton to refill. No. 3 Company were rearguard, and were sniped by four or five Boers. Otherwise it was an uneventful march. Spens, with remainder of the column, is coming along. We marched eight miles to Morgenzou, where we encamped. Spens and the main column came in at 3. We went out to catch wild horses for the company to replace casualties.

December 6.—Morgenzou. Reveille at 6. The column remains halted to-day. I got up at 4, and went over to catch some more ponies. Got eleven, all told, including last night. All captures were sent in to Standerton. Hilton goes back to rejoin his regiment. We had orders for a night march to-night at 2. All mounted troops with fit horses start off at 2 a.m.

December 7.—Reveille at 12 midnight. The following column moved at 2 a.m. to Blaauwkop: 150 14th Mounted Infantry (Major Bridgeford), 200 13th Mounted Infantry (Major Pratt), 250 Gough's Mounted Infantry (Major Gough), two guns J Battery, one pom-pom; also three companies of Black Watch (all under Colonel Dunlop, R.A., taking three days' supplies, Scotch-carts, and Cape-carts).

A dark night, but fine; a lovely dawn at 4. Only distant bodies of Boers to be seen. We reached Blaauwkop at 6. No. 1 Company was right flank guard. The three companies Black Watch will remain on Blaauwkop for a week, until relieved. The whole of Gough's Mounted Infantry crossed the drift of the Vaal west of Blaauwkop, and pushed on after some cattle. Got 300 or 400 head, but in bringing them back got chivied severely by seventy to eighty Boers. Colonel Dunlop had to send out 110 men of the 13th, and two guns. The 14th remained at Blaauwkop to look after the transport. Gough's Mounted Infantry brought the cattle in all right, and wounded two Boers.

A hot, fine day. All off-saddled and breakfasted. At 3 we went on due south, crossing the Vaal at Outspan, and marched on to a high ridge at Schoel-

plaats. Our left flank guard had a skirmish with the same Boers, but there were no casualties. We halted and camped here in a very strong position. We have fifty men called International Scouts with our force, who are nothing more nor less than surrendered Boers who have taken up arms again against their own kith and kin. Extraordinary, isn't it? They are very useful, however.

December 8.—Schoelplaats. Reveille at 6. A lovely morning. We moved off at 8 to try and co-operate with Plumer's and Poulteney's columns, which are at Elandsberg (Wakkerstroom district, forty miles south-east of us). We marched to Hartebeestefontein, and got into helio communication with the latter. No news, and unable to co-operate. No Boers visible to-day. We marched back to Blaauwkop, reaching the same at 3 o'clock. At 11 o'clock we went off again for a night march. Needless to tell you both horses and men were very tired. The horses have had a very thick time during the past ten days, and many have died or been shot. We started off at 11, due east, to round up cattle and Boers.

December 9.—Marching. A long, weary trek till dawn; a fine dark night. At 4 we reached Tweefontein, our destination. Fourteenth Mounted Infantry were rearguard, 13th main body, Gough's in advance. All went forward at a trot. A lovely sunrise. Got 1,500 head of oxen, two Boers, and 10,000 sheep. Otherwise nothing. The Boers are conspicuous by their absence.

We halted for two hours at a farm just east of Kaffir Spruit. At eight we all went back to rejoin the main column at Morgenzou, eighteen miles back. It was a blazing hot day; the horses were very, very weary. After a dull, monotonous march we came in at 3 o'clock, and had some welcome tea, during a severe thunderstorm. Everybody is very short of horses.

Colonel Dunlop's haul amounted to 2,000 fine oxen, 10,000 sheep, four Boers, three waggons.

Rawlinson's and Simpson's columns are not very far

off. I am glad that Price-Davies (Gough's Adjutant who did so well in Gough's disaster) has received the V.C. He has both D.S.O. and V.C.

December 10.—Morgenzou. Reveille at 6. All remain halted here to-day. The blockhouses are going well, and have been built up to Vaalbank.

I hear that another 100 Boers have been captured by Dawkins' column somewhere about Stinkpool Valley. That is rather good news. The prisoners we took lately state that Louis Botha and all will surrender soon. We have heard that before! Anyhow, I don't think they will hold out for another winter.

Major Bridgeford looked at the horses this morning; out of ninety-eight we have only fifty-six fit.

14th Mounted Infantry, General Spens' Column.

Referring to my last letter, I must tell you that my No. 1 Company did very well that day: Major Bridgeford congratulated the company and myself, and I was awfully glad about it, because I must confess I had a good share in making it what it is.

General Bruce Hamilton's capture was a fine one, and beautifully worked.

December 11. — Morgenzou. The column remains halted here to-day. This morning a force of 500 mounted men went on reconnaissance as follows: 130 14th Mounted Infantry (Captain Brindley), 200 13th Mounted Infantry, 170 Gough's Mounted Infantry, two guns J Battery R.H.A., all under Major Pratt.

Boyd went in charge of thirty-two men of No. 1 Company, then left at 5 a.m.

Last night we got the welcome news that General Bruce Hamilton made a successful night march of fifty-one miles, and captured a laager of 131 Boer prisoners (all armed), waggons and Cape-carts, women and children, 4,000 head of cattle, and sheep; 7 Boers killed.

His casualties were three officers wounded, also seven

men. His force was a mounted one, taken from Rawlinson's, Byng's, and Simpson's columns.

This is the third knock Louis Botha has had during the past ten days. The success was wholly due to the intelligence obtained by Colonel Wool-Sampson. As you will see, intelligence is the thing at this stage of the war, and a good intelligence officer will enhance any General's career. Intelligence has been the weak part of the army out here, and had the authorities at first taken the right people the war would have been over long ago. However, it is of no use writing about the might-have-beens—everybody has had to buy his experience; it is so easy, too, to be wise after the event. I had a quiet day in camp, with the usual duties. Pratt's force, which left this morning, has gone towards Beginderlen Bridge to co-operate with Poulteney and Plumer against some Boers there. Fourteen armed Boers surrendered at Blaauwkop this morning. This is very satisfactory. This afternoon Captain Fielding and I rode over to a farm and shot some wild pigeons for dinner and breakfast.

December 12.—Reveille at 6. The column remains halted to-day. Only forty horses are left in, and thirty of these are unfit. I heard to-day that Pratt's force has so far got 700 head of cattle. A fine, hot day.

December 13.—Reveille at 6. Fielding went down to Durban this morning. MacLean came back. Pratt's force returned as well, with two Boer prisoners and 1,000 head of cattle. Otherwise there is nothing fresh. Fine, hot weather.

December 14.—Reveille at 6. I heard the welcome news that Bruce Hamilton has captured another seventy Boers, killed fourteen, and taken two laagers, with cattle, waggons, etc. Very satisfactory. Otherwise no news. A force went out this evening at 11 p.m. under General Spens and Major Gough, as follows: 50 men 14th Mounted Infantry (under Cooke), 50 men 13th Mounted Infantry, 50 men Gough's Mounted Infantry,

170 Yeomanry (from blockhouses), to round up some Boers.

December 15.—Reveille at 6. Yesterday and this morning I got twenty-one remounts, all rather poor. Church parade at 10. At 11 the General's force came back, and brought with them fourteen prisoners and cattle. They went in a south-south-west direction, and crossed Blesbok Spruit. At first dawn the whole force split up and galloped to several farmhouses. Parties of Boers were, however, waiting for them, and several of our men got wounded and several horses shot.

MacLean went with Cooke. We had six horses shot in the battalion and three men wounded. Major Gough had a finger blown off and was severely wounded in the arm, whilst his Adjutant, Price-Davies (a splendid little fellow), and Nunn of the 13th, had got far ahead of their men and galloped a dozen Boers into a farm. Revolvers were plentifully used, and several Boers were killed. One Boer taken prisoner was dressed in khaki.

General Spens was in great form, and galloped down some Boers himself. About fifteen got away. However, fourteen Boers are better than nothing! I wish I had been there; but one can't always be in everything, can one? These early morning gallops are magnificent, like fox-hunting, but ten thousand times more exciting. I am very sorry about Gough, although it is not serious. He is, I think, one of the most dashing and capable of our Mounted Infantry commanders.

December 16.—Reveille at 6. A fine, hot day. Usual camp duties. All the afternoon I put up a target at 800 to 900 yards, and had the company out shooting.

December 17.—Reveille at 6. No news. We possibly trek to-morrow to Amsterdam. Two Boers surrendered yesterday. I sat on a court of inquiry on one of the Gloucesters recently taken prisoner. Major Gough has gone into Standerton, and will probably be invalided home. Nott, of the King's Royal Rifles, takes temporary command.

On the whole, it looks as if the war may be over within the next four months. Burghers are surrendering everywhere, and others still out are showing a tendency to come in. Horse-sickness has begun again, and one has to be very careful when and where horses graze and water. At all events, I don't think the Boers can hold out this coming winter, as the whole country is bare of mealies, and the lines of blockhouses which will be complete by then will kraal them in.

December 18.—I received your welcome letter, dated November 15 and 16, to-day, also newspapers. We are to trek now (11.30, night). Hope to get some more fighting soon.

P.S.—Six hours later, in the early morning of December 19, Lieutenant B. Moeller was mortally wounded in action at Holland, Transvaal, and succumbed to his wounds on December 23, 1901.

THE END

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